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AND COMMUNICATION
IN THE CHURCH

**YOU
AND COMMUNICATION
IN THE CHURCH**

Edited and Introduced by H. F. JACKSON, Jr.

Practical Studies in Church Communication

THE CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS

STUDY SERIES

FOR THE CHURCH

AND THE WORLD

1970, 1971

YOU
AND COMMUNICATION
IN THE CHURCH
SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

Edited and Compiled by B. F. Jackson, Jr.

~~MR. CHARLES E. RICHARD~~

MAR 26 1982

~~LIBRARY OF THE~~
~~PENITENT (HOLY) CHURCH~~

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YOU AND COMMUNICATION IN THE CHURCH

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TO

The Invincible Seven

JENNIFER

TIM

BEN

JILL

CINDY

Todd

Toby

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Preface

Work on this book began in Nashville, Tennessee, as I was approaching a major change in careers after seventeen years service with the Board of Education of the United Methodist Church.

The landscape shifted from the rolling green hills and lush riverland of Tennessee to the landscape of the Rocky Mountains—where, from my job as director of the library at The Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Mount Evans can be seen reflecting the early morning sun.

From youth to age, the landscape is always changing and I have thought to myself repeatedly: an honest man must stay free, even if he has to fight for his freedom from time to time . . . with words.

This has always been the problem of free men, of free civilizations: whether to use power to sustain individual liberties, or whether to use both power and force to control the marketplace.

Our book does not attempt to resolve the tragic dislocations of this century brought about by everything from famines to inflations; from crises of constitutional confrontations to shortages of men and materials. Who can count the reasons why free men must always be able to speak freely to one another, and to write freely to one another about what they say, and hope, and plan?

When each person, each man, each woman, begins to realize that communication is an individual problem, as well as a mass problem, the quality of our participation in the life of churches will be greatly improved on both sides of the pulpit. Then you can say or write what you mean with hon-

esty, integrity, effectiveness, and credibility. Our words will represent us.

Though the landscape is always changing, from green river valleys, to the Rocky Mountains, each one of us can, with our spoken words to one another—and with our written words—at least attempt to live up to the light, and the truth, and the life, that we as individuals, and as a nation of free persons must sustain, and earnestly live. For the sake of our church, our nation, and our children.

Our words are important to someone: let them ring both free and true.

B. F. JACKSON, JR.

Acknowledgments

A number of people have made significant contributions of time and talent to this book. We have worked together to prepare it for several years. A partial list of the persons to whom I am most indebted is as follows.

Secretaries who have worked beyond the call of duty are: *Mrs. Margaret Evins*, *Mrs. Sue Wooten*, *Mrs. Ella Mae Durrard*, *Mrs. Charlene Eubanks*, all of Nashville, Tennessee; and *Mrs. Neoma Martin* of Jacksonville, Texas.

Miss Barbara Haslem of East Lansing, Michigan, gave counsel and helped in several other important ways. *Mrs. Lynette Sprague* combined secretarial and editorial duties, shifting from one to the other intermittently. She lives in Leavenworth, Washington.

Two other persons who also worked both in secretarial and editorial capacities are *Mrs. Mary Evelyn Amstutz* of Frisco, Colorado, and *Mr. Carl J. Holmes* of Denver, Colorado. Mr. Holmes's research organization, *The Communicrafters*, was extremely helpful in many ways.

The financial contribution to the editor by *Mr. and Mrs. O. C. Armstrong*, just before his death, helped bring this book to completion. The Armstrongs' active interest and faith in the practical problems of church communication is a good example for us all. Mrs. Armstrong lives in Fort Worth, Texas.

Without the encouragement and patience of my wife *Elsie Campbell Jackson*, this book would never have reached completion. We thank her. . . .

Introduction

Churchmen increasingly realize the importance of communication. Many religious leaders in the United States believe the future of the church depends upon its ability and willingness to make a better use of all communication media—mass and personal.

Two media, written and spoken communication, are used by all of us so frequently that we are generally not even consciously aware that communication is happening. These two means of communication, writing and speaking, are the basis for all other media. Without speaking and writing, no motion pictures, no still pictures, no radio-TV programs could take place. Only nonverbal communication, on a very elemental basis, could happen without the written or the spoken word.

The purpose of this book is to help clergymen and laymen develop written skills and speaking skills by presenting in depth what several specialists think about communication. The section of the book, WRITTEN COMMUNICATION, will be helpful to any serious effort a person might make to improve his writing skills.

Students, professors, clergymen, and church members will find something useful for the particular assignment in writing each might face.

The section on SPOKEN COMMUNICATION AND CREDIBILITY does not attempt to develop skills or techniques. Instead, in Part One, spoken communication is treated in a number of the chapters as often being a result of subconscious elements rather than direct attempts to achieve perfection. Perhaps spoken communication more than most of the other media,

is more definitely a part of the live person in action, uninhibited. It may be that like humility, effective spoken communication is often a by-product of many other skills, understandings, appreciations, and convictions. This is not to downgrade the importance of books that attempt to give direct help with development of speech skills, but to recognize that there are many of these and that this book deals more with the indirect approach.

The five authors in this section give attention to such specialized areas as *communication and credibility*; *preaching as communication* (with two quite contrary views); *the place of communication in small groups* (contrasting approaches); *ethics as a communication issue*.

You will probably be more interested in the chapters on credibility now than you might have been a year ago. The credibility issue has become critical for our lives and existence. The lecture and address are printed in transcript form, taken from tapes of actually delivered presentations, with the intention that the reader will ask himself all kinds of questions about these examples. Is preaching a valid mode of communication as Dr. Potthoff holds? Is credibility an issue? Is ethics an issue in all communication? Finally, what about the validity of communication in small groups over against larger audiences spoken to by one person?

Again, in the area of developing skills and techniques, there is a short section on tape recordings and slides. Here are two media, the equipment for which is present in practically every home. If you want to know more about how to use these simple media, you will find help from the chapters written by young men who were born since these two media became commonplace.

"Meanings are in people." This phrase, popularized by David Berlo, sums up, to a considerable extent, the view of all of the writers in this book because communication *is* a two-way street. And ultimately, the meaning received by a person is the meaning that counts.

PART ONE

Spoken Communication and Credibility

1. Spoken Communication: A Medium

B. F. Jackson, Jr.

“Tank-you, tank-you,” said the little boy less than a year old.

Tod was speaking his first words and repeated “tank-you,” frequently. He liked the sound of these words and was delighted with the results.

When adults gave him an object he wanted, his “tank-you” seemed to please them and often brought a smile. In fact, he found that if he thanked the person in advance it even helped his chances of getting what he wanted.

Tod found that if he spoke the words “tank-you” when

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he did something nice for another person, this too produced an affirmative response. If the other person had forgotten to thank him for his assistance, this generally encouraged the quick reply, "Oh, of course, thank you very much."

Even before his twelfth month, Tod had learned a great deal about spoken communication.

Tod's great-grandfather became ill for the last time. He was eighty-four. In addition to his old age he had a number of other things wrong with him, including pneumonia. He had been in the hospital several days and he was unconscious before being taken to the hospital.

Great-grandfather had not spoken since entering the hospital. Finally the incessant coughing of another man in the next room brought him to semiconsciousness long enough for him to speak his last sentence.

"That old man next door is having a hard time of it. I feel sorry for him," he said.

As might be surmised, these final words came from a man who seldom complained about his own difficulties, and was generally quick to sympathize with another person in need.

From our first year to our last day, spoken communication is essential to life. For most of us, no other communication form takes such a great portion of our time or assumes such an important role in our daily existence.

Even though a great segment of our communication time is spent in participation by listening—as in the electronic media such as radio and television—this does not change the significance of speech as a medium in our lives. It simply illustrates the complicated overlap that is present in all modern communication.

Radio, television, and film are not dealt with in this volume, but we need to keep in mind that the oral element in television and film is very important; radio could hardly exist without the voice as a medium. One mistake we are likely to make in regard to radio, television, and film is to think about the *source* of the program to the neglect of the *re-*

ceiver. Actually, the act of listening and/or looking at these media is a very important half of this use of spoken communication.

To date, this great silent audience of tens of millions has not realized the power that it could have over media content. Up until now this power has been important to the producer, but, unfortunately, chiefly in terms of a body count. Some day this sleeping giant will awaken and realize that its views can have a great influence on determining what the program content will be. So far it has seemed next to impossible to organize this audience into a pressure group of any kind.

A look at the rapidly growing body of literature in the communication field seems to indicate that most of the other media have been given more attention than the spoken word. Since there are industries based on film, radio, television, and written communication, these receive the greatest amount of attention. The fact that spoken communication is not yet as clearly and distinctly defined as a discipline has limited the attention given to this medium.

It may seem that since we constantly take part in spoken communication that most of us are using this medium effectively. However, this is not true. Our daily experience makes this evident. There are perhaps more levels of competence in this medium than in any other.

Spoken communication is the most intimate, the most inexpensive, the most precious, the most fragile of all the media. It is transitory, it cannot be recaptured except with the use of an electronic device. It requires people to congregate and therefore there ought to be some interdependence in it.¹ Much of what is to follow is a discussion of face-to-face communication, in which there surely should be interdependence, if it is to be effective.

Speaking skills are essential to self-development. It is also important for the maintenance and growth of the self-

¹ These ideas were expressed in a conversation between the author and David K. Berlo in November, 1970.

concept. We will return to this consideration in chapter nine of Part One.

The spoken word is also needed in the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. This is certainly a necessity in one-to-one, face-to-face relations. Whereas it may be possible for persons who cannot speak the same language, or who for some other reason cannot talk to one another, to become good friends and to have a fine relationship, it generally takes longer and very likely it requires a higher level of trust.

As the group becomes larger than two people, the difficulties probably increase geometrically. Surely the committee or the group in a classroom situation would be hard-pressed to fully develop and maintain their relationships without speaking.

The most frequently used medium for persuasion is verbal communication. This is dealt with in the chapters on credibility, but the sermon is only one of the many ways in which persuasion is attempted. Some hold that any situation in which mutual interreaction is possible may be more effective than the sermon or address. However, whatever the size of the group or the methodology to be used, spoken communication is likely to be constantly needed in persuasion.

But the spoken word is also needed as a facility to help individuals within a group decide what they believe while at the same time becoming more aware of the beliefs of others.

There seems to be a genuine need for a person to talk out loud even if it has to be to oneself. In situations in which persons have been deprived of their opportunity to speak, it has often been found that to be able to speak again is therapeutic. This, no doubt, is related to the development of the maintenance of the self-concept. But it is also one of the best ways to clarify one's thoughts, especially if the person can get reactions to these expressions from a trusted friend. However, even when there is no evident reaction,

it helps to be able to express one's thoughts to someone, even if all they do is listen attentively. Speaking is probably more essential to mental health than we have realized.

In *Dynamics of Grief*, David K. Switzer stresses the fact that talking with another person is essential in being able to handle the anxiety of grief. Having described the need for verbal communication with another he states that nonverbal communication can be of help; even the mere presence of certain persons at the time of grief can be a powerful form of communication. But, Switzer adds, "the powerful affective content of words must not be forgotten."

Conversation between two persons is not only one of the first ways in which we communicate but it is also one of the highest forms that communication attains. We often hear of the lost art of conversation. However, many of us know that conversation does not need to be a lost art. Perhaps there are reasons why it appears to be so. For one, in our mobile society we hold conversations with a much larger number of people than was true in an earlier society. And today we are certainly more aware of the gaps that exist between different cultures, generations, and professions.

In spite of all this, we know that genuine conversation can still be among the richest and most rewarding experiences in life. Such experiences often take place between persons who are only together a short time. Some of the most sincere and enlightening conversations are those held between persons on an airplane, or in some other place where two individuals are unexpectedly thrown together for a few hours. In these situations they find that they have much in common about which they are eager to talk.

In his book, *Conversation and Communication*, the Dutch psychoanalyst Joost A. M. Meerloo affirms that people need conversation. It is his contention that we need to believe in conversation again, in the veracity of unspoken relationships behind words.

Let us laugh together about something. . . . Conversation gives deeper information about mankind because it gives it involuntarily. It tells about the unconscious. . . . We give our secrets away and hear another's secrets. We are curious and our curiosity is satisfied. We want to exceed human frontiers, we want to know what is behind social taboos. What happened? What happened in you? How did you react? Conversation answers the greedy, questioning child in us, for the early childhood questions ever resound in us. . . .

It does not matter if he talks nonsense. The verbal contact as such makes sense. It is the atmosphere and companionship which please us. We are warmed and delighted because we are together in a play without rules. A feeling of comfort and well-being steals over us, a notion of being safe and well defended. We are caught up in the ecstasy of life that became word.²

The history of the church runs parallel to the development of speech and writing in history. The dependence of the church on oral tradition and on written Scripture has led at times to an overdependence on these two media. This has been especially true of spoken communication. Religion has often been viewed as talking, particularly when this is done on Sunday morning at eleven o'clock in a church building. This confronts the church today with the necessity of using spoken communication more carefully, and certainly points to the need for an experience and action-centered religion. Speech will still be needed in the planning, carrying out, reporting, evaluating, and storing up experiences or actions which have religious significance for us.

² Floyd Matson and Ashley Montagu, editors, *The Human Dialogue* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), pp. 146-147. Chapter entitled, "Conversation and Communication," by Joost A. M. Meerloo.

There is no greater challenge and opportunity for the church than to encourage as much face-to-face communication as possible on issues of significance to individuals and society. Face-to-face, two-way communication is essential to religious growth and personal fulfillment.

2. Credibility and Communication

B. F. Jackson, Jr.

The polarization of thought regarding the ethical issues involved in credibility is the most significant development in communication of the seventies. In a few short years, we have jumped from print to radio to television to a series of innovative uses of all media. This has come to be known as the multi-media explosion. Along with this explosion has come the stark and bitter truth about the ethics involved in human communication.

Credibility has become an issue in every segment of private and public life. During the last twelve months some of the most frequently asked questions have been, "What about the credibility of Mr. Nixon?"

"Can we trust Senator Ervin?"

"Did Haldeman level with us, or should we believe Dean or Magruder?"

These questions lead to others. What about our minister? If you are a minister, what about Mr. Smith, the banker? And if you are a patient, what about Dr. Brown? Can you believe him when he says, "You do not have cancer"?

The brief years of this decade are watershed years in American communication history. The issue of freedom of the media has become a new kind of crisis, a compelling crisis that demands those of us who care to stand and be counted.

This requires conviction and courage. Where does the church stand in this crisis?

It is not just in politics that the issue of credibility is raised. It is a vital, significant concern of every person. It is an issue in every classroom from the first grade through graduate school. It is an issue in every church where children, men, and women relate to ministers and others in thinking about what it means to be a Christian. And even more so, as all of us relate to the larger community in which we live.

Do the members and staff of a church believe in each other's credibility? Do the community of nonbelievers and those not associated with the church believe in the credibility of church members? Or do they continue to say, "I can't really see any difference between church members and those who stay home."

The credibility of a person or institution in the community depends on the communication image mirrored by that person or institution.

In Volume I of the *Communication for Churchmen* series, William F. Fore holds that the image is sometimes a hindrance to communication being accepted. He cites a study which shows that the general public is less interested in communication under church auspices than other auspices.

Fore also suggests that the implication of such studies is that the church must strive to become more worthy as a valid information source.¹

In the several years since the above was written, credibility has become increasingly well known as an important factor in the success or failure of individuals in public life. The last two presidents of the United States have had more difficulty in the realm of credibility than most of their predecessors. Surely what is so frequently referred to as the generation gap has been due in part to what many of the younger

¹ William F. Fore, "Communication for Churchmen," in *Communication Learnings for Churchmen*, ed. B. F. Jackson, Jr. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), pp. 33-34.

generation call the doubtful credibility of the establishment, including their parents. It seems appropriate that churchmen, clergy, and laymen, give more attention to the subject of credibility.

Let us examine what some of the more recent research has to say about credibility.

An early finding of credibility research was the discovery that "who said it" is an important factor in an individual's acceptance of ideas and information. Many names have been given to this variable. *Source credibility* is the term that most researchers have adopted to stand for the "it" which seems to determine whether a given person is believed to be credible or not. From now on, rather than use the term source credibility we will simply speak of the credibility of a person, of an article, or of a program.

Although this generalization has been widely accepted, more consideration needs to be given to the basis for the influence of a person or of an event. Credibility has been described as if it were lacking in specific dimensions, and simply present in small or large amounts depending on such objective characteristics as age, sex, or social status.

A natural assumption has been to view the variable of credibility as a somewhat fixed attribute of a person, rather than a perception of the receiver which is subject to change. For example, if the president said so, it must be true.

TWO CREDIBILITY STUDIES

Hovland and others, in their study of 1953, went a bit beyond the above statement about credibility.² They said that credibility was at least two dimensional. They found that a person's credibility depends upon how his *expertness* and *trustworthiness* were perceived by another. These were thought of, however, as somewhat fixed characteristics of a person.

² C. I. Hovland, I. L. Janis, and H. H. Kelley, *Communication and Persuasion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 103.

A person's competence, said Hovland, is a task-related variable. His trustworthiness is more likely to be something a person is born with, whether he possesses a high or low degree of this important characteristic. This research was a step beyond the earlier view that credibility was a somewhat fixed and objective characteristic of the communicator.

The researchers found a positive correlation between credibility and persuasion. For instance, the English people believed in Churchill so much that he was able to persuade them to do the almost impossible.

Berlo and others have gone considerably beyond Hovland and associates in a careful examination of credibility.³ They have investigated the criteria actually used by receivers in evaluating messages from communicators.

Essentially, their research method was to develop a set of polar adjectives with opposite meanings. Persons were then asked to rate people in relation to what they thought of them. Here is an example of Berlo's method:

A RATING SCALE⁴
Henry Alfred Kissinger

Trained	.	.	.	.	.	.	Untrained
Friendly	.	.	.	.	.	.	Unfriendly
Wise	.	.	.	.	.	.	Unwise
Capable	.	.	.	.	.	.	Incapable
Competent	.	.	.	.	.	.	Incompetent
Decisive	.	.	.	.	.	.	Indecisive

(Thirty-five different sets of scales were developed and used as the basis for Berlo's findings.)

To Berlo and his associates, trustworthiness is a more general term than Hovland used. Although the perceiver's perception of the speaker's intent is an important aspect of

³ D. Berlo, J. Lemert, and R. Mertz, "Dimensions for Evaluating the Acceptability of Message Sources," mimeographed report, Michigan State University, 1966.
⁴ Erwin P. Bettinghaus, *Persuasive Communication* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston), 1968.

trustworthiness, other high-safety terms such as calm, safe, patient, friendly, kind, congenial, gentle, hospitable and warm are also important.

The competence dimension is an evaluation of meaning that is peculiar to the situation in which information-transmission is involved. The major scales include both context-relevant terms such as trained, experienced, informed and qualified as well as terms which are relatively context-free like authoritative, able, and intelligent.

In his research, Berlo isolates three dimensions of credibility: safety, qualification, and dynamism. Though they arrive at findings compatible with Hovland, Berlo and his associates also discover some new factors important to any consideration of credibility. Some semantic differences distinguish Berlo from Hovland: for our discussion, Hovland's trustworthiness can be thought of as being roughly equivalent to the dimension Berlo calls *safety*. The same is true of Hovland's *expertise* and the Berlo dimension of *qualification*.

A third and new dimension of credibility that Hovland did not include, but which Berlo uses, is called *dynamism*.

The defining scales used in the later study indicate that *dynamism* is a "combination of the potency and activity factors." Some of the highly loaded dynamism scales use words such as fast, energetic, bold, active, aggressive, decisive, and confident.

When these terms are seen with their opposites—slow, tired, timid, passive, meek, indecisive, unsure, it is apparent that the dynamism factor appears to be an evaluative dimension that can be called *disposable energy*. This means the energy a person has available to clarify, emphasize and carry through to a conclusion the ideas he proposes for action.⁵

Though the results indicate that dynamism is statistically independent of the trustworthy and

⁵ Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz, "Dimensions for Evaluating the Acceptability of Message Sources," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, pp. 575-576.

competence factors, the relative instability of dynamism suggests that it may not be psychologically independent of the other two factors. The dynamism dimension can be conceived of as an intensifier. In other words, given an evaluation of a communications source as trustworthy or untrustworthy, competent or incompetent, the polarity or intensity of these evaluations of the communication source is intensified through perceptions of high dynamism. Under this assumption, low energy communication sources would seldom or ever be perceived as either extremely trustworthy or extremely competent.⁶

Furthermore, these studies "emphasize the multi-dimensionality of the variable (credibility) and they support the argument that the person's image should be defined in terms of perceptions of the receiver rather than the objective characteristics he possesses. The image of a person is dynamic in that it both influences and is influenced by the communication event."⁷ The application of the meaning of this research will be found in the following two chapters.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

3. Credibility and The Minister

B. F. Jackson, Jr.

What does this research have to say to the clergyman who desires to be an effective advocate using the medium of oral communication? What does this mean for the minister who wants to use the sermon as a medium for advocacy?

The church through the centuries has often played the role of advocate. This has not changed today although the church and its leaders may find this role different.

One of the reasons that the advocacy role of the church is different today is that there are numerous other institutions also at work on some of the same important tasks. For instance, in the area of race relations many ministers and laymen would like to bring about change. Clergy and laity have often banded themselves together with the result that proposals have been made to integrate institutions, including churches, to relieve some of the inequities and injustices of minority races. Now the church is one of many institutions at work on these changes.

To use the same example of race relations, let's imagine a context in which the minister has decided to be the advocate of better race relations in the community. In this case, let us assume that the minister has decided to go beyond vague statements and attempts seriously to persuade his congregation to act on two related issues: (1) The need and desirability

of persons in the congregation to work toward making the neighborhood, where the church is located, one in which integrated housing is possible. (2) The positive step among the persons of the congregation to decide that members of all races will be welcome as full-fledged members of the church.

In order to consider the situation the minister faces as realistically as possible, we will make several additional assumptions. First, we will assume that the leaders and many of the members of the congregation are reasonably open to persuasion on the issues under consideration. The geographical region in which the church is located and the background of most of the people is such that they are at least willing to listen and consider the ideas of the minister.

Second, we will assume that the minister has made careful preparation over a period of time for the advocacy of his position by doing extensive research into the position of the Scriptures on the subject, and by tracing the ideas he wishes to present down through history until the present day. Finally, we will assume that the minister has real skill in sermonizing. He organizes his thoughts carefully and states his ideas with conviction and fearless courage.

Since we have so carefully and favorably stacked the cards, the chances of success seem unusually high. This may be, but for the purpose of our discussion we will ask, Is there an additional factor? Will the dimension of credibility which we have examined above be the additional ingredient which may cause a given minister to succeed or fail in his advocacy?

Our view is that credibility will prove to be one of the most important factors in this communication event. This is not to hold that the credibility of the minister is more important than the careful preparation of his sermon or numerous other factors. Rather, we hold that this one ingredient in the communication event may be sufficiently important to weight the scales in favor of success or failure.

To review, it is here held that research has convincingly

shown that at least three dimensions of credibility are very important in a situation like this.

First, will the minister during his sermon be perceived as a competent authority on the subject under consideration? From what we have said about the careful preparation over a period of time, our minister may have a fair chance of being accepted as competent on the subject. We need to remember, however, that we described his congregation as one already fairly open and friendly to his position. This would probably mean they would expect him to go much beyond the position which was already held by most of them, thus showing his real competence to be beyond that which most of them could claim.

Second, will the minister, through his sermon, be perceived as trustworthy and safe to follow on this issue which in so many American communities is a "red flag" issue?

Third, will the minister be perceived by those hearing his sermon to have dynamism; that is, the disposable energy available to emphasize, augment, and finally help implement the suggestions which he is advocating?

We see that this kind of discussion takes us far beyond the bland statement that credibility is a static attitude of a person to the view that it should be defined in terms of the listener's perception, rather than in terms of fixed objective characteristics of the person speaking.

What do we know about the probable perceptions of people as they relate to credibility as competence, as trustworthiness, and as dynamism? Research has shown that the first two of these dimensions of credibility are frequently independent of each other.

These two dimensions are often easier to perceive in two separate persons, than to be present and embodied all in one personality. For example, a minister may be perceived, by many who hear him preach, as quite competent on the subject at hand. He may be seen as a thorough and well-

trained scholar on what the Scriptures have to say regarding proper race relations. He may be considered fully informed and highly qualified to interpret history on this issue. And, highly important to the more sophisticated listener, he may be accepted as one who has competence in interpreting the psychological and sociological implications of his ideas. But it does not follow that he will also be perceived as a trustworthy person whose ideas are safe to follow.

A considerable body of research indicates that a person who is perceived as trustworthy does not necessarily have to be thought of as highly competent or vice versa. The dimension of trustworthiness, as perceived by a given group of people, is somewhat more intangible. It may be hard to explain, but it is very important in all human relations. As is quite evident in countless examples in history, people are often misled in their perceptions of trustworthiness. Such different national leaders as Hitler, Churchill, and De Gaulle were considered as trustworthy by large groups of people in their own nation, even though their ideas might not be acceptable elsewhere.

This is an appropriate place to point out that credibility is not a thing, and most of all it is not a good or a bad thing. The good or bad depends upon the context, on the ideals and ultimate character of the person in whom confidence is placed. It should be easy to see, that from our perspective Hitler's high credibility with the German people was ultimately a very evil thing. Because of this high credibility Hitler was able to lead the German people to near destruction of their nation and to near destruction of the world. But this is from our viewpoint not from theirs. He had very high credibility with a majority of the German people until very near the end.

The important thing to remember is that the dimensions of credibility are not static attributes of a person, but are perceptions that are subject to change in the minds of the perceivers.

If the first two dimensions, competence and trustworthiness, are often independent of one another, what about the third dimension of dynamism? To review what was reported earlier as the results of research, dynamism seems to be statistically independent of the trustworthy and competence dimensions, but the relative instability of dynamism suggests that it may not be psychologically independent of the other two factors. Rather, the dynamism dimension is to be conceived as an *intensifier*.

Thus, it seems evident that no matter how competent or trustworthy the clergyman is perceived to be in his sermon, this is not enough unless he appears to have sufficient energy available to enable him to carry through his suggestions. The question is: Does he have the drive to see things through, to do what he says he will? Talking about drive is difficult, but to see drive in a great leader is easy. The energy to see things through, to get a job done even when one is dead tired—these are some of the criteria by which people judge whether a person has the dimension of dynamism.

Research increasingly indicates that at least these three dimensions of credibility are very important if a minister in his sermon is to be believed and followed by his parishioners.

CREDIBILITY IN PRACTICE

Several suggestions are made to the minister who desires to enhance his credibility:

1. Since the dimensions of competence and trustworthiness are frequently not perceived as being equally present in the same person, it follows that a minister ought to determine, as far as possible, his relative strength and weakness in these two dimensions.

Lest a person be overly fearful of hurting his own self-confidence, remember that *perceived* competence or trustworthiness are *not* necessarily equal to actual competence or trustworthiness. However, this does not lessen the importance

of what is perceived by those who are in the congregation when a sermon is being preached.

We have already referred to the scales of measurement that are beginning to be available to the minister who wants to know how his credibility dimensions are perceived by a given group. We need to remember that one's credibility is not necessarily the same in two different groups. The serious student of this subject is directed to the article which formally reports the research to which I have referred throughout this chapter.¹ A growing number of social scientists and communication specialists are developing skills that can help churchmen in finding ways of measuring their own dimensions of credibility.

If a minister finds that he is perceived as weak in competence (as clergymen often are) and strong in trustworthiness, then what can he do? He can be thankful, for one thing, because it will probably be easier for him to improve his competence if people perceive him as trustworthy, than if it were the opposite case. We doubt that persons will continue to come to hear a minister in whom they do not have a high degree of trust. However, this is not enough, and too many ministers take advantage of our trust rather than work to improve their competence.

.2. Some clergymen who have worked hard to be as competent as possible may have neglected sharing their knowledge and ability to interpret experience, with a trusted group of opinion leaders. If a minister can spend more time with such leaders, sometimes they will do much to interpret his competence to their friends. The influence of a sermon is often determined when people discuss, after church, what the minister said in church.

3. Another suggestion is made for those churches that have a multiple ministry. Here an attempt can be made to select ministers who can compliment each other on the dimensions

¹ D. Berlo, J. Lemert, and R. Mertz, "Dimensions for Evaluating the Acceptability of Message Sources," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Winter, 1970.

of trustworthiness and competence. This obviously cannot be accomplished unless the ministers are willing to allow one person to play a prominent role while the other takes a back seat. This takes real trust and willingness to be a part of a team. But it should allow persons to learn from each other as well as bring out the best in one another.

4. Where the above is not possible, a clergyman may be wise to seek a layman in his congregation who has a high degree of either of the dimensions in which the minister has demonstrated his weakness. If such a layman is not readily found within the congregation, persons outside the congregation can be found to assist the pastor. This is quite often done.

Any of these alternatives may enable a team of persons to be used as components in building an image of credibility for the pulpit and for the church.

5. The associations and organizations a minister belongs to and is active in may have a great deal to do with increasing his credibility. Obviously, this factor can work both positively and negatively.

6. It is important for the minister to know about the membership groups to which his congregation belongs. By knowing what these groups stand for, a minister may make reference to their beliefs in a helpful way. Also, references to authorities in whom his congregation has confidence can be valuable.²

7. We would be remiss if we did not mention what has been called "persuasion by character." The sermon is one of the many contacts which ministers have with their parishioners. The sermon does not begin when the minister stands up to address his people at a given hour on Sunday morning. The sermon begins long before, as he spends time in getting acquainted with his people, as he attempts to serve them in their time of illness and health, as he attempts to

² Some of the ideas expressed above were stimulated by Erwin P. Bettinghaus' book, *Persuasive Communication*, pp. 118-120.

undergird and back up not only his members but all persons in need. In this area of nonverbal experience with his people, pastoral credibility grows significantly. Quite often, in these day-to-day experiences, parishioners will have the opportunity to see their minister as he really is.

For the clergyman or church leader who is truly concerned with effective advocacy through oral communication, these three variables of credibility: competence, trustworthiness, and dynamics should be seriously considered.

If you are a layman, the next chapter is especially for you. Your minister might want to read the next chapter over your shoulder. Too many people think that credibility is mainly an attribute of politicians, clergymen, educators, businessmen, and other leaders—professional or otherwise. This, however, is a fallacy.

4. Credibility and The Layman

B. F. Jackson, Jr.

Communication is a two-way street; so is credibility. The credibility of the layman is as important to the minister as the kind of credibility the minister has with him. Actually, the two are mutually interdependent.

It is like two sides of a coin. All of us: clergyman and layman, adult and youth, man and woman, even children, are subject to the laws of credibility. How often do children ask: "Is mom or dad telling me the truth?" And how often do you ask, "Is my child, my teenager, my young adult telling me the truth? What about his credibility?"

I repeat: credibility is a two-way street.

Whatever the subject and whoever the person, it is appropriate to ask: "Do you believe that John's statement is credible about the subject under consideration?" The belief depends on whatever dimensions of credibility you accept, so that the key question with regard to credibility of laymen as well as ministers is: "Is John trustworthy in regard to that subject? Competent on that subject?" Otherwise, how can he be trusted no matter how sincere he is? And, finally, after these two have been added to each other, the dimension of dynamism enters into a layman's credibility, much the same as it enters into the credibility of a clergyman.

There are a number of differences in the credibility of

laymen as compared to clergymen: far too often the layman's credibility is dependent upon such nonverbal factors as church attendance, pledging and regular payment to the budget, pleasant appearance, friendliness, and sometimes whether he praises the minister's sermons and other actions. Even presidents of the United States have been known to doubt the credibility of anyone who did not agree with them and support their policy.

Since we are looking at both sides of the coin, one of the significant elements in all credibility is the attitude that each person involved in credibility has towards the other person. Big business has for too many years based their advertising on motivational research which has seemed to generate the feeling that most of us are stupid and can be manipulated to buy almost any contrived product and will stoop to buy it, no matter what. The unfortunate thing about this has been its spillover into all walks of life. If the minister assumes that his congregation is somewhat stupid, he can tell them almost anything about God, prayer, the hereafter, with the thought that they will find him credible. Likewise, the layman has fallen into the belief that he can sit through a dull sermon which does not challenge him and tell the minister on the way out, "That was a fine sermon." The minister will, regrettably, often believe the layman's hypocritical remarks.

Political administrations in recent years have dared to be open about the fact that they consider the citizens of the United States to be like children, not competent to know the truth as to whether another nation should be bombed. And as a result, we are lied to continually. Administrations will probably continue to think this way of people, until more of us get so interested in politics as to do our homework, have our convictions, express them freely, and defeat those officials who think us stupid.

Specifically, what is an example of the importance of the credibility of a layman with his minister? A leading layman in a large church recently praised his minister in public. The

group involved was a small group of young adults. With his arm around the clergyman, the layman said to the group, "Charles, our minister, has been a real friend to me. He helped me in time of need. He stood with me when the going got hard. I am indebted to him because of his genuine acts of love when I needed him very much."

Did the layman mean this? Could the statement be accepted as a credible statement? The minister could remember how he had tried to help this man and he was glad that it seemed to be appreciated. It happened to come at a time when the young adults were questioning the minister on another matter, and therefore it seemed an appropriate testimony.

The difficulty arose a few weeks later when the minister's bishop told him that this same layman, along with another, had called on the bishop to complain about the minister. The bishop was not told of these fine acts, which seemed to be appreciated, and therefore it left the minister somewhat frustrated and in doubt. What about the credibility of his good friend?

This is where laymen have such a fine opportunity if only they could recognize it. A small group of laymen who agree, ought to be able to advise their minister about some of his weaknesses if they go at it right. This would be much more helpful than if they go behind his back and seek to point out why he should be moved from their church without having the courage to face him with it.

True, many ministers would have difficulty facing such truth.

But the difficulty would not be as great, finally, as trying to figure out what a layman means when he praises in one instance and opposes in another. Especially, when the opposition is behind the minister's back.

Another opportunity that laymen have is to work together as a team, as has already been suggested in the previous chapter. In a group of five men and women, no doubt some are

thought of as highly competent on certain subjects. Others are known to have unquestionable qualities of trustworthiness and finally, some have more dynamism than others. Such a group with knowledge and skill ought to be able to develop a team with a high credibility rating on all fronts: with their minister, with their fellow members, and indeed, with the outside community.

As stated above, too often the layman's credibility has been judged almost entirely by his nonverbal communication. This is all right and let it be said that it is harder to lie with acts than it is with words. However, finally, the layman must also stand up and speak. He must let it be known what his convictions are in the community and in the world. He should not wait for "experts" to decide everything for him. He must have his own valid opinions, based on intelligent effort, on important issues within the church and the community. He must be willing to express his convictions on these issues and he should inform the minister periodically about these views just as he should inform his senators and congressmen about his views on national issues.

How otherwise is democracy to work?

What have we said? We have held that credibility is no less important for the layman than for the clergyman or any other leader. We have held that credibility is a two-way street, and in the years ahead much of our success in this world of problems will depend upon how credibility functions among people. It will depend upon trust, but no less on competence. And finally, in this world of problems and issues, a high degree of dynamic effort (dynamism) will be necessary if we are to achieve some of our goals which hopefully are the goals of the church and synagogue.

With laymen as with all persons, "persuasion by character" is probably most important of all the elements in credibility. As we humans live our lives in the midst of other persons, what words and acts do we have for others in time of illness and health, trouble and success, tragedy and experiences of

joy? Are we thought of by our acquaintances to have disposable energy enough to carry us through when the difficulties are great? Do we have the drive to do what we say we will? Do we have the energy to see things clearly to get a job done?

What is our rating on the dimensions of trustworthiness, competence, and dynamism?

But here we must stress once more that the concept of credibility, which has its value as we have tried to show in these three chapters, is not a value in and of itself. More important, by far, are the ideals of the person involved. More important altogether is the truth which the minister or layman is trying to represent, and the character of the people involved—whether it be the person being perceived as credible or low in credibility or the persons doing the perceiving.

5. Preaching as Communication

Clyde H. Reid

Preaching is under heavy fire today. Many of the young disdain it. Many of the middle-aged ignore it. Many clergy dislike it. Never has the criticism of preaching been as heavy or as widespread.

Great preachers, like the buffalo, are becoming more and more difficult to find. Their era is past, and yet many people cry out for an excellent preacher to fill their pulpit. Seminary

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trustees keep hoping their school will find the formula which will once again produce strong pulpit figures. Pulpit committees looking for those rare pulpiteers wring their hands in despair. Why? Because great preaching belongs to another time, another place, and most of these hopes are in vain.

I would like us to briefly consider the reasons why preaching is under such heavy fire, and note what is taking its place in the church. Then look at the current criticisms of preaching, examine the new cultural situation which has contributed to this preaching crisis, then study preaching in the light of current understandings of communication. Finally, I will suggest some of the implications of this new understanding of preaching and the need for a new style of communication in the churches.

THE PREACHING CRISIS

Preaching has a bad name, which in itself is strange. When someone says to you, "Don't preach at me!" he is saying something about preaching and his attitude toward it. If the only ones criticizing preaching were the disgruntled parishioners who want a good excuse to sleep in on Sundays, that would be one thing. But I have heard modern preaching criticized by some of America's outstanding religious leaders, those who have most invested in its success.

Theodore O. Wedel, the president of a large eastern seminary, has said, "Preaching has gone to pot." Wedel also cited a layman as saying, "Many in our parish regard the pulpit as harmless and boring."¹

I do not rely on isolated quotations for my evidence, but rather the sum of my own experience. As a pastor for five years I preached every Sunday. I could assess in some degree the difference made by my preaching. Now, I am not criticizing the outstanding lay people with whom I labored. I loved and admired them. They taught me much about

¹ Theodore O. Wedel, "Is Preaching Outmoded?" *Religion in Life* (Autumn, 1965), p. 534.

life. Neither am I criticizing today's preachers. Even the best preachers face the crisis of preaching today. However, I am critical of preaching as a mode of communication. I frankly did not see my own preaching (which is, of course, above average) as making much difference in the *behavior* of my people. This is the real test. Not attendance. Many authorities point to churches where a strong preacher still "draws" large congregations. But the test is not whether people turn out, but whether or not the preaching *makes any difference in their lives!* As a pastor, I couldn't see that it made much difference. This bothered me.

This concern bothered me enough that I resigned my first pastorate and migrated 3,000 miles to Boston University to study communication theory and research. I wanted to see what this discipline had to say about preaching. Boston had an outstanding theology school as well as one of the country's top communication schools. I convinced the two deans that I should be allowed to do an interdisciplinary doctorate between the two schools, even though there was no such program in the catalog. On the whole, I found that preaching was in even more trouble than I had imagined, but I also found great hope in the new understandings emerging from the field of communication research.

As a seminary field work supervisor for four years in the New York City area, I had many opportunities to visit churches and hear sermons. Some of them were by the nation's famous pulpit figures. I must say I was not impressed. I was generally bored. From my observation, so were most of the laity beside me in the pews. I was also struck very forcefully that those churches with the highest paid preachers were not the vital churches in metropolitan New York. The vital churches were smaller, less famous, more involved in the agonies of their neighborhoods.

My boredom with modern preaching is not unique. When I speak with laymen they report that preaching generally bores them, too. To be sure, there are exceptions. There are

people whose lives have been changed by a timely sermon. I do not deny this for a moment, and I applaud it when it is true. The problem is that it is so rare compared with the tremendous investment of time, money, and energy in the preaching endeavor. Back to the problem of boredom. I attended a church once which listed 2,100 members on its rolls. Of those 2,100 persons, about 100 were in attendance. Only about one person in twenty felt obliged to worship that week. I am convinced, from what laymen tell me, that many of them stay away because they do not find the traditional, sermon-centered worship service holding their interest.

My problem with the traditional preaching service is that the message doesn't usually touch *me*. It doesn't *involve* me in any way. It rarely asks anything of me. The preacher usually presents his message in conceptual terms which rarely dip into human experience. It is unrelated to *my life*. I rarely hear illustrations in the sermons of my ministerial colleagues, and a purely conceptual message—one which is primarily ideas, not experiences—just doesn't speak to me.

However, suppose I hear a really excellent sermon—one which is lively and interesting and which moves from concepts to illustrations so that I can relate the concepts to my life. There is still a basic problem with the structure of preaching. It is the same communication problem which faces lecturing as a mode of education. The speaker does not involve me with my contribution—my ideas, my questions, my doubts, my experiences. The sermon is heavily dependent upon the preacher's own ideas, questions, and experiences, or upon those he can read or hear about. Usually that leaves me out. I sit there wanting to say a hundred things. Wanting to be heard (not just to have a bucket of words poured over my head), wanting to converse with this man who claims to have a special message for my life. And so I sit with frustration, and my boredom takes over. Again. Nor am I alone. I see the nodding heads around me, the busy pencils, the wandering faces. And I know that others feel as I do.

The crisis in preaching is not simply because we have poor preachers. That is true enough, but there is a reason why we have poor preachers and why we have poor listeners at this time in history. The reason is that we have a new authority situation and a new person emerging. In short, we have a whole new ball game, and we must now learn the rules of that new game.

THE NEW SITUATION

Preaching, as it has historically been practiced in the Protestant tradition, is both authoritarian and built upon a dependence model.

Preaching is authoritarian in the sense that authority is focused in one man or woman. That individual does the thinking, reading, studying, and experiencing for a large group of people, then processes that thinking and reading through his personality for the benefit of the gathered congregation. Consequently, it is the minister who learns most, grows most, and benefits most from the sermon.

Preaching is also a dependence structure. The congregation is basically passive, dependent upon the person in the pulpit for guidance and insight. The person in the pew is rarely given any opportunity to speak up or to voice any response or opinion. The listener *depends* upon the clergyman as a guide or father, which leaves him in a dependent role.

We have emerged from that period in history when most people were relatively uneducated in comparison to the minister. He had more education, more insight, more books, and, beyond that, a claim to special revelation. There was more need for strong authority to interpret a world of mystery, and the clergyman supplied that need along with the teacher, the professor, the doctor, and a few select others. But the average church member today is better educated than ever, and has access to adult education, travel, and constant education through the variety of mass communication media at his disposal.

In fact, there is a new man and a new culture emerging today.² This has helped to make preaching, as we have known it in the past, an anachronism for a great many people. Anachronism is a word that we preachers are prone to use when we could just as easily use simpler language to say the same thing. What I mean is that preaching belongs to another time, another era of history. People are showing us with their bodies that they are not interested in sitting passively, to listen week-after-boring-week while someone stands before them and speaks on their behalf. They are showing us by taking those bodies somewhere else on Sunday mornings.

James H. Robinson, in his Beecher lectures in 1955, recognized this changed authority structure. He said that "the preacher once enjoyed a wide and uniquely central place in the life of our society. Time and progress have changed it radically. The place is still unique, but it is no longer central."³ Robinson went on to point out the important role the minister played in the early history of this country—how he helped to shape the government, initiate schools, start hospitals. The minister was in a deep sense the "cornerstone of his community." Robinson concludes that now a host of skillful professionals carry out the functions once centered in the clergy.

The change in the authority structure for the minister has its parallel in the role of the teacher in our culture. The National Education Association published an interesting book a few years ago with a chapter entitled "The Changing Role of the Teacher." The shift in teachers' status in American life is documented and discussed. Fifty years ago, the teacher was a commanding figure in the community because of his knowledge. He was a source of information and a performer.

² See my book, *21st Century Man Emerging* (Pilgrim Press, 1971), for a more complete discussion of the new man emerging.

³ James H. Robinson, *Adventurous Preaching* (Great Neck: Channel Press, 1956), pp. 19-20.

The teacher had the power to provide a view of a larger world, and was purveyor of novel experiences.

The report goes on to say that today's teacher is generally better prepared, but the social context within which he works has changed.

Through the mass media, a whole new set of prestige figures has arisen. The teacher's interpretations of political matters are overshadowed by a host of radio and television commentators; his discussions are made pale by the polychrome eye of the motion-picture cameras; his standards of music are obliterated by . . . disc jockeys . . . his readings of Shakespeare are made amateurish by professional performance. In essence, among the chief changes in the circumstances of teaching brought about by the rise of the mass media has been the loss of the aura of authority.⁴

"The loss of the aura of authority." No phrase could better describe the plight of the preacher today, as well as other professionals. We live in a new authority structure, and the minister can no longer command a hearing simply on the basis of his ordination. He must carve out a new authority for himself—an authority which also honors the authority of his listeners. As one intelligent woman put it, expressing her impatience with her church, "Isn't it strange that I always have to be audience?" A layman put it this way: "The church sees my role as filling up a seat. I now know I'm worth more than that!" These two persons were expressing one of the important dimensions of the new authority situation. There is a new breed emerging today, and we must relate to that new person differently.

⁴ *Mass Communication and Education* (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association of the United States, 1958), pp. 75ff.

THE NEW MAN

The new man (and new woman) is non-authoritarian, and is therefore not interested in authoritarian structures of any kind. In fact, he rebels against authoritarian leadership, even in the military where it has been historically entrenched. Word came recently of two American battalions who refused to move into enemy territory because they didn't believe the purpose of the mission was worth the risk. So they revolted against their leader and refused to go. The leader was removed.

The new man is a dialogical man, and the culture he is creating is one which does not accept leaders who cannot or will not listen to their followers. This new man insists that he has a right to speak and be heard. The leader who will not listen to him does not earn the right to be heard himself. So the new man seeks out those social structures which honor his right to dialogue. He is not interested in being a passive listener. He assumes the right to express himself and to have his contribution honored—to be a man of dialogue.

The new man is more than dialogical; he is also participative. He insists on the right to help shape the structures and institutions which influence his life. He wants to participate in the decisions that shape his existence. This makes him even more unhappy with the traditional preaching structure in which he has nothing to say and which he feels powerless to influence.

The new man is also one who seeks interdependence. He wants to relate to authority figures who can be open to mutual influence. This means moving from dependent structures, where he is treated as a child, to inter-dependent structures where both he and the authority figure bring their respective gifts and honor *each other*. In this type of social arrangement, creativity is freed and groups tend to be most productive and mature in their decisions.

The new man is a sign of hope, a leap ahead to a more

mature being trying to catch up psychically with the technological leaps of recent decades. Yet he is difficult to live with during the period of adjustment. We don't understand him. We are hurt by his rejection of our sacred institutions, because we don't understand that he is insisting on something better, more satisfying.

And so we have the strange phenomena of the "empty pulpit." The layman feels an emptiness from the pulpit, and cries out for a great preacher who will really get through to him. The preacher senses the lack of communication and feels empty in his efforts to communicate with the unhappy layman. So the emptiness is felt on both sides. The cause is often blamed on the preacher or layman, but it really belongs to the new cultural situation in which we live—the new authority of the new man.

At the same time, we have the counter-phenomenon of some very large churches gathered around a charismatic figure who seems to draw large numbers to sit happily in dependence upon his preaching. I suspect we will see this for a time, as there are still many persons who, in their insecurity, seek a strong father-figure who has all the answers.

Eventually this will pass. For several reasons. First, not many preachers can pull it off. Too many of them are honest with themselves and cannot pose as the all-knowing one. Their integrity does not permit this godlike stance. Second, people are maturing and becoming less willing to yield up their authority to any leader who does not honor their dialogical rights. And third, it is apparent from group research that hostility builds up under authoritarian leadership. The build-up of hostility in authoritarian structures tends to cause disintegration in the long run. So I do not see this as a viable option for the new man and the newly emerging culture, though it is seductively tempting at the present time. I insist on my prior question: Are lives really changed by preaching? How do people really grow and change?

Another dimension of the new situation is that this new

man, with the impact of television, now learns, feels, and thinks differently than he did before the advent of electronic communication.

Marshall McLuhan has helped us most in understanding this new communication scene. We now live in an era in which the influence of the printed word is diminishing. Now our children grow up with television as a major influence on the way in which they learn. From their earliest days, they are being bombarded with electronic communication, and this cannot help but influence their mode of responding to the world. Erik Barnouw has spoken of McLuhan's thought in this statement: "The core of his message is a persuasive idea. It is that each new medium (i.e. television) alters our psychic environment, imposing on us a particular pattern of perceiving and thinking that controls us to an extent we scarcely suspect."⁵

McLuhan himself wrote that "the effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions and concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without any resistance."⁶ According to McLuhan, "we become what we behold."

It is difficult to see, as yet, the full impact of this newly emerging man with his new modes of perceiving truth. We do not yet know fully what its implications are for preaching. I am sure it means that we cannot continue as before, and there are many signs that people do not *hear* preaching anymore. They especially do not hear it in ways that influence their behavior at deep levels.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

If this assessment of the present situation in preaching and of the culture is reasonably accurate, then there are some

⁵ Erik Barnouw, "McLuhanism Reconsidered," *Saturday Review*, July 23, 1966, p. 19.

⁶ For a more thorough discussion of the preaching crisis and its implications, see my book, *The Empty Pulpit* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).

clear implications for the future of the church and the training of its leaders. This is how I see the role of the minister in the church of the future, which is the day after tomorrow in some places and yesterday in some others.

The role of the minister will be that of a flexible leader of a basically democratic social structure. In many churches, we have the appearance of a democratic structure, but with most decision-making and leadership still centered in the pastor. It will be the minister's role to call out the gifts of his congregation, not to possess them all himself—which leads to a thinning of his abilities. It will be his job to provide a structure within which others can grow, learn, and share their insights, experiences, and gifts.

There are many ways he can move from authoritarian preaching to a dialogical communication structure. He can involve men and women in groups which help shape the sermon for the following Sunday. He can help those in his congregation to learn how to shape creative worship events. I am impressed by the pattern in the experimental Church of the Celebration in San Dimas, California. In this church, the congregation meets once a month for worship on Sunday evenings. The senior pastor leads the celebration on occasion, but at other times teams of laymen plan and lead it. A variety of small groups meet in the meantime, providing an opportunity for people to study, grow and learn about themselves in relation to the gospel and the world.

The "democratic" minister may occasionally need to stand firm, even as a good parent must. He must occasionally be decisive or authoritarian when the situation calls for it. And I am convinced that he will still need to speak or preach occasionally as "representative" for the group.

So, should we ignore preaching and train persons only in democratic leadership styles? Certainly not. When the preacher speaks, he should speak well. He should be able to organize his thoughts, use simple, clear language, relate his ideas to the historical tradition out of which he comes, and

present the product of that thought with power. Any leader must be articulate if he is to be a spokesman for his people. He must also be trained to listen to the feedback and response of the people to his ideas, and be ready to listen to and honor *their* ideas.

The future training of the clergy, then, should include strong, practical training in democratic styles of leadership, self-knowledge and flexibility, awareness of the uses of authority, *and* the ability to speak or preach well.

I believe these abilities should be requirements for the granting of a professional degree in ministry. If the exercise of the profession calls for these skills, then they should be required for graduation. I am not at all sure they are best learned in the classroom. Some students come already trained in these skills. It may be that special workshops could be offered to help those who need practice until they are judged proficient by their colleagues, their professors, and by those upon whom they will soon inflict their leadership.

In addition, the whole curriculum may be a practice ground in which the student has opportunity to get feedback on his communication efforts and his ability to organize and integrate biblical and theological insights with life in the present.

The social structure is changing, and the old style of preaching will not last long in the new world emerging. However, while our young leaders prepare their people for a more dialogical and participative style of congregational life, they will still need to do a great deal of preaching, anachronistic though it may be.

6. When Preaching Comes Alive

Harvey H. Potthoff

In an editorial dated April 29, 1953, *The Christian Century* said, "Never has there been a time when the churches and the Christian cause stood in greater need of the help which the theological seminaries can give in furnishing preachers who will be heard."

In the relatively few years since those words were written, the value of preaching has been seriously called into question. The sermon, we are being told by some, is on the way out. What shall we make of the current debate over the

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meaningfulness of preaching and the communication of the gospel?

The purpose of this chapter is fourfold: (1) To indicate the major roles which preaching has played in the Christian tradition, with special reference to Protestantism; (2) To assess the major criticisms of preaching which are being made, and to ask what can be learned from these criticisms; (3) To argue for the importance of the ministry of preaching in the context of the worship service; (4) To suggest certain conditions which must be fulfilled if preaching is to come alive, achieving a more creative place among the ministries of the church in the years ahead.

There is something distinctive and urgently important about effective preaching. Contemporary learnings about man, communications, and Christian growth can contribute to a deeper understanding of what preaching can and should be. The present situation calls for historical perspective, sensitivity to the changes taking place in the contemporary world, and a rethinking of the preaching functions and styles in light of the present situation.

THE FUNCTIONS OF PREACHING IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

To preach means "to make proclamation as a herald." Jesus, we are told, came into Galilee "preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel'" (Mark 1:14, 15). Jesus preached to the crowds; he apparently reserved teaching for his disciples, although the distinction between the two is one of degree.

The apostles, following Jesus' example, developed the missionary sermon, proclaiming God's saving work in Christ and issuing the call to believe and be saved. In Romans 1:16-17, Paul suggests that in preaching, the salvation-event is made real for those who receive the gospel with faith. Through preaching, people are addressed, encountered, and called to response. Paul did not think of a sermon situation as a man

delivering information to a passive audience. The preaching situation was a Word-event—hopefully issuing in faith.

In the early years of the church, Chrysostom (345–407 A.D.) and Augustine (354–430 A.D.) reached heights of pulpit eloquence. It is significant that Augustine should speak in his *Confessions* of hearing Bishop Ambrose preach during the period of his spiritual searching.

After a number of centuries, in which emphasis on liturgy pushed preaching into the background, the friars helped to recover the sermon. However, it was in Luther and Calvin that preaching was most significantly redefined and given a place of major importance in the Protestant Reformation. Both insisted that the Word be preached whenever the sacrament was given. Preaching, they believed, was for the imparting of faith, for instruction, and for confrontation with God's judging and redeeming Word.

It is also essential that we recognize the different settings in which preaching has been done. Sometimes the emphasis has been on proclamation, sometimes on exhortation and invitation, sometimes on instruction and nurture. It is inevitable that we find a different emphasis when persons who know little or nothing of the Christian faith are being spoken to and when persons who have made a Christian commitment are being addressed. John Wesley speaking to great crowds in outdoor eighteenth-century England, Harry Emerson Fosdick preaching on the National Radio Pulpit in the 1930s and 1940s, Reinhold Niebuhr preaching in a university chapel, Ralph W. Sockman preaching in Christ Church, New York, Billy Graham addressing a mass meeting, a village pastor preaching to his congregation on a Sunday morning, have all had somewhat distinctive groups of listeners. But they have all preached, and there is reason to believe that their preaching has made a significant difference in the lives of many persons.

What, then, may we say of the major functions of preaching through the centuries of Christian history? Preaching has

involved a ministry, representative of the Christian community, serving several interrelated functions: the presentation of the living Word of God that persons might be confronted with its reality, claims, invitation, demands; interpretation of and instruction in the Christian faith and life; exhortation and invitation in relation to the Christian message; nurture in the Christian faith and fellowship, directed to a growing life of witness and service in the world.

Three dimensions of the preaching event are of continuing importance. The preaching event involves *verbal communication*. The preaching event involves *group experience*. The preaching event involves a deeply *personal dimension*. Phillips Brooks insisted that "preaching is the bringing of truth through personality." He might well have added two words so that his statement would be "preaching is the bringing of truth through personality *to* personality." Personal truth (given verbal expression), through a person, to persons—that is preaching. Because of the personal dimension, preaching involves concern, caring, compassion, commitment. The true preacher knows he cannot manipulate the outcome; rather, he is called to be faithful in the witness and proclamation which he brings.

The long history of preaching presents evidence that lives have been changed, attitudes altered, directions clarified, purposes redefined, faith kindled and deepened through preaching. If there is now a decline in interest in preaching, if its influence is waning, we do well to seek the causes. In a world hungry for hope, there is clear need for instrumentalities which can bring the resources of Christian truth and life to men with kindling quality.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH PREACHING? SOME CURRENT VIEWS

"I would not have preachers torment their hearers, and detain them with long and tedious preaching, for the delight of hearing vanishes therewith, and the preachers hurt themselves." So wrote Martin Luther in his *Table Talk*. But alas,

it appears that not all contemporary preachers have taken Luther's words to heart. Preaching is under attack. There are those who hold that it probably will be with us for a time—but inevitably it is on the way out. We are told that the structures and processes associated with traditional preaching “turn off” increasing numbers of modern persons. Whatever useful functions may have once been fulfilled through preaching they can be now better taken care of in other ways. Charles R. Brown once said that the fate of Protestant Christianity is bound up with the rise and fall of effective preaching. There are many persons who would now challenge that statement.

The claim is also made that inherent in the structures and processes of preaching there are influences which actually operate against growth in Christian maturity. The very format of preaching is said to presuppose that the preacher is an authority figure delivering utterances to a passive, less enlightened group of people. A kind of dependency is nurtured, and preaching easily becomes a spectator activity demanding little of the listener in terms of serious thought, responsible commitment or growth toward spiritual maturity. Preaching may actually encourage preoccupation with the “cheap grace” of which Bonhoeffer wrote so critically. In its wordiness and monological character, preaching excludes serious congregational participation. The preaching situation may actually misrepresent or distort the gospel. Add to this the facts that *no* preacher is capable of coming up with a good sermon week after week; that the educational levels of modern congregations are rising; that we now have access to new and more effective forms of communication, and we begin to see that preaching really is in trouble.

Observations such as these cannot be taken lightly. Wordy sermons, preaching which does not seriously involve the congregation (a one-way affair), preaching which does not speak to the deepest issues of human life, preaching which implies that the minister is the answer-man, preaching which

fails to kindle faith, preaching which does not come out of shared relationships and experiences, *is not good preaching*. It may, in its dynamics, distort the gospel.

But it need not necessarily be like that. Preaching can be much more than a performance, a monologue, a recitation of simple answers to complex questions, a listing of platitudes, an exhortation to be good and to support the church. It can be a tremendously effective means for communicating the gospel to persons who are hungry for hope.

The most ineffective preaching I hear cannot be blamed on the inherent structures and processes of preaching. It is usually to be blamed on poor preparation, insensitivity to contemporary human experience, the failure to relate the sermon to the context in which it is delivered, the failure to have anything significant to say, the lack of a kindling quality. But until we find better ways of supplying the functions which preaching has historically fulfilled, we had better not rejoice in its demise! It is interesting to observe the growing interest in preaching in Roman Catholicism, at the very time some Protestants are seeking substitutes for it.

WORSHIP AS THE CONTEXT FOR PREACHING

“. . . the traditional symbols of religion and concepts of theology are empty for those who do not experience them as answers to their questions.”¹

These words from Paul Tillich provide a door to a consideration of preaching in the context of worship. To be sure, effective preaching is sometimes done in other settings, but most preaching is done in the worship setting—and it is here that Tillich's words have special relevance.

Human beings are creatures of language. We become human and grow in humanness through language. The individual's self-image is built up out of the languages of image

¹ From the Introduction to *The Grandeur and Misery of Man*, David Roberts (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).

and symbol. We relate to the world, we find meaning through language.

Man's orientations to the ultimate questions and experiences of life come to linguistic expression. To grow toward depth in faith and hope and love requires linguistic tools through which we can express, aspire, commit, and commend.

Worship is one of the fundamental languages of faith. Here life is recognized, celebrated, and dedicated in the light of man's deepest and most enduring relationship—with God. In worship, including the basic religious rites, the pivotal experiences of life are recognized, celebrated, and dedicated. In worship man acts out symbolically such meanings as life has for him.

To participate in worship is to internalize, in greater or lesser measure, its meanings. The best education for worship is participation in worship. In true worship faith is kindled, nurtured, expressed, directed. Worship is its own reward, but it always points beyond itself. It is the community of faith acting out its own self-understanding as a people of God.

Yet, worship cannot stand on its own forever. Without criticism, renewal, interpretation, it tends to lose its inner vitality and relevance. This is where preaching enters the picture. True preaching keeps pointing to the living source and object of worship.

The genius and distinctiveness of the sermon is that in the context of worship it brings: (1) The proclamation of the good news which is fundamental to Christian faith; (2) an interpretation of that good news as it has come to be expressed in concepts and symbols; (3) an instruction which shows how the message speaks to the ultimate human questions; (4) a linkage of the languages of rite and myth—illuminating the meaningfulness of the community's coming together, showing how the traditional symbols of religion and concepts of theology do speak to the profoundest human problems; (5) and an invitation to take the next steps leading to fuller participation in Christian faith, life, and witness.

James Gustafson has written, "The preacher's function is to bring a particular people into a more significant relation to the meanings of the church. . . . He views a concrete human community in the light of the truths to which the total Christian community adheres."² The preacher-pastor-liturgist, functioning as a representative of the community of faith, with specialized knowledge of a *particular* community of faith, is particularly qualified to correlate "message and situation" in the context of worship. We look to him for a constructive reinterpretation of the language of faith.

Preaching, thus conceived, is not an isolated event. It finds its distinctiveness within the framework of the life and ministry of the whole church.

WHEN PREACHING COMES ALIVE—ROOTS AND FRUITS

Vital preaching is a communication event. It is a "happening" in creative interchange. It is grounded in the conviction that reality is more than a collection of self-contained entities. Reality in its depths is relational. The urge to be in touch, to relate, to communicate, to become something new through sharing is grounded in the nature of things. The creating and redeeming God is manifest in the midst of creative relationships, making for wholeness of being. When language becomes the vehicle for acceptance, the reestablishing of broken relationships, the gathering of broken fragments of life into some new pattern of meaning, the illumination of life in its depth dimensions, the summons to commitment in the light of new faith and hope, a new affirmation of life in joy and gratitude, then the Word of God is at work. The Word of God oftentimes comes by means of words—and that is the clue to the potential meaning of preaching.

But if preaching is to come alive, if it is to be a communication event, *it must emerge out of the life of a communi-*

² James Gustafson, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 64.

cating community. A congregation which is not experiencing meaningful communication is not likely to hear a sermon or participate in a sermon-event. And a sermon-event which does not issue in a deeper, more creative kind of communication has not really fulfilled its role.

Thus, the soil for good preaching involves the preparation of mind, heart, spirit, and expectation on the part of preacher and people alike. All are involved in the preaching event. All make their respective contributions. The questions persons are asking, honesty in searching, sensitivity to the concerns of others, the will to be a part of the Body of Christ, an openness to new perceptions and new understandings, a readiness to respond with integrity—all these become a part of the situation in which the Word of God is manifest.

The preacher is not likely to get anything clearly said which is not already implicit in his relationships with his people in various settings. And a congregation is not likely to hear anything which is not already latent and implicit in their style of being the church. It is said that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the one true church." It might be added, only in that fellowship of the Spirit can the gospel be rightly preached and the sacraments duly administered—for the words which communicate the Word are *relational*. When Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick defined preaching as "personal consultation on a group scale" he was insisting that this event is not an island unto itself. Preaching that comes alive, lives and moves and has its being in the matrix of caring relationships. Those relationships are present in varied forms of ministry: education, care of souls, and nurture through groups.

The fruits of vital preaching are also relational and communicative. He who has truly worshiped, and within the framework of worship has participated in the preaching-event, has a new relationship with life. Having offered praise, having expressed confession, affirmation and dedication, having encountered the Word of God anew, he *is in touch with life in a new way*. Worship-oriented preaching is often the

mediator of the grace which frees—offering a freedom from the past and an openness to the future. The Word of God declared in Jesus Christ is a Word which frees man to be a more participating person in a world struggling for wholeness.

Many experiments are now being carried on designed to find more creative, more dialogical, more participatory styles. In this there is hope. Thomas Carlyle once said that the preacher has a perennial place “could he but find the point again.” Finding the point again is our task.

7. The Conceptual Rut—A Sermon

James William Morgan

We have three Scripture lessons for the day, each very broad and general, but related to the same theme: Life. The Old Testament lesson asks: "What does the Lord require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep his commandments?" (Deuteronomy 10:12) In a sense, the epistle lesson says the same thing, only now the emphasis is on Jesus Christ as the way to life. "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God. . . ." And the lesson ends with the words,

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The following is the manuscript of a sermon preached to his congregation on May 16, 1971. The tape can be secured from The Ira J. Taylor Educational Resources Library, 2233 South University Blvd., Denver, Colorado 80210.

"And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his son." The Gospel lesson again says, "And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

As I thought about these three lessons, I began to see that we would have difficulty because of the differing conceptual ruts out of which we operate. It is hard to see, or hear, or think about the same thing because the key words of these lessons cause us to fall into those ruts. So, my main purpose today is to help us think together about how differently these truths appear once we can recognize our conceptual ruts and be free of them.

Perhaps we need an example removed from the lessons. The idea that the earth was a globe, and not a flat surface, existed long before Columbus. But people had lived in the conceptual rut of a flat earth for so long that they couldn't get their minds around the daring new idea that you could reach India by sailing in the opposite direction. "A round globe? How preposterous. You'd fall off of it! Any fool can plainly see that!" What a salesman Columbus must have been to override this conceptual rut and get the backing, and the men, to prove this wild new theory. Is it possible that we cannot see new truth because we get into conceptual ruts that are just as bad? I remember a man once saying that the difference between a rut and a grave is a matter of inches.

Or take a much more serious conceptual rut affecting our day. Serious reading in theology today will show you that we are at last being freed from the conceptual ruts the Greeks imposed on our classical theology. According to these philosophical patterns of the Greeks—or conceptual ruts as I am calling them—God is the immutable, unchanging one, complete in himself, needing nothing. This idea has given us trouble for years as we have tried to fit that theological conception of God into the Biblical images of a God of love, a God involved, a God who is moved and changed by the plight or praise or victories of his children. But since Whitehead

and some of his predecessors, and since Charles Hartshorne, we are beginning to see God in dynamic terms of process, a God who is therefore much more alive, a part of history, involved. That's a very big idea, I know, to throw in with no further elaboration. But it is another example of getting caught in conceptual ruts and missing the truth that is there for us.

I

So, I desire this morning to try to help you read these lessons with an awareness of how we are caught in certain conceptual ruts and therefore unable to hear the truth that these lessons offer. (Let me be quick to say that we are all caught in conceptual ruts. I can think back on some sermons that I know now I couldn't fully understand what I was doing because I was operating out of conceptual ruts I have now given up. If that shakes you, then I guess you shall just have to be shaken, for all of us twenty to fifty years from now, if we are still growing, will see truth quite differently.)

But let me illustrate. The Epistle and Gospel lessons use the words "eternal life" as the goal of existence, the aim of our faith. But how many miss what is being said because eternal life suggests heaven or hell, or at least a form of life that begins after death. At this point, our beliefs begin dividing in dozens of ways. As the years are added to our lives, the idea that life after death is the major goal of religion often assumes a larger and larger part of our religious thinking. In middle age, however, we waver as to its importance, often despising what we call "other worldly" religion. We say we are concerned with the here and now. Youth hears the same words, eternal life, and thinking they mean life after death only get turned off completely by what they often consider to be a fairy tale. Now, how in the world can we hear whatever truth is there with those conceptual ruts controlling our thinking? Take these words from John: "And this is eternal life, that they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ

whom thou hast sent." Or take the sentence from the Epistle lesson: "And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

If you believe the main objective of religion is to guarantee a safe passage to heaven, this will mean one thing. But what if you clearly see that Jesus was always talking about a *quality* of existence, not the length of existence, when he spoke of eternal life? Then, of course, these lessons come to mean something entirely different. Well, this is true! Jesus used the words eternal life as something that could be entered into, here and now. Indeed, I would be so bold as to suggest that you could substitute the words "abundant life" for eternal life and get the real impact of this teaching. It is not entirely the same, for the abundant life Jesus was talking about does have an eternal quality about it. But just for the moment I want you to see the conceptual rut about eternal life meaning only life after death. Whether you accept it or reject it, I want you to see how this misreading causes you to misread the whole lesson.

To ease your mind about my own personal convictions—if it begins to sound like I've denied that I believe in life after death—let me say quite clearly that I do not think this is the main objective or goal of our Christian faith at all. I do not think we can ever know very much at all about life after death. The one confidence I have about the whole business is the love of God—about which I am absolutely certain. I simply do not believe we escape the love of God or the judgment of God by dying. What that finally means, I do not know, but I am perfectly willing to leave it with whatever God's love or judgment may dictate.

But this lets me say quite emphatically that Jesus' concern was with this life—its quality—not the quantity of its days nor the length of its existence. Of what use is eternity to a man who despises the days of this life? I am very certain that everything in our faith is concerned with finding and living a quality of life, here and now in this earthly existence, a

quality that is itself the difference between life and death. When I find a person living each day in dread and fear and anxiety, I call that real death, not life at all.

Now perhaps you can see what I mean when I say that if you can free yourself of conceptual ruts, you can begin to see these lessons as offering something quite profound and wonderful. It is not at all a lesson about some kind of future reward or punishment.

II

Let me try briefly to describe another conceptual rut that prevents us from hearing the whole truth of this lesson. The Epistle lesson says that God gave us eternal life (or abundant life) and that this life is in his son. And the lesson begins with the words: "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God."

Now here we run into conceptual ruts about Christ. Again, I believe many are victims of previous concepts that will no longer do the job. For example, the principle problem of Christ, it seems to me, is that we operate out of Greek concepts that make Christ a mixture of two substances that won't mix. We try to say he's half-god substance and half-man substance, and the way we define substance means that these two won't mix. One theologian has called this the "oil and water" theory of Christ, and it is well put.

Let me use an illustration I got from Dr. Hobbs, a most unusual theologian who has done a great deal to break through these concepts that so strangle our thinking. He points out that the words Messiah, or Christ, were primarily a title to signify "the anointed one"—anointed for a specific purpose. In ancient times when one was chosen or ordained to do something specific, his head was anointed with oil. From this he moves to some very irreverent titles for Jesus, purposefully to shock us out of our traditional attitudes. He dares to call Christ, "old oil head" or "old greasehead." Now that irreverent approach may turn you off so badly that you

are unable to hear what I am saying. But Dr. Hobbs's purpose is quite clear. What difference does it make what you call him if he can lead you to find the true meaning of life? Or, in more traditional language, I can say: Jesus Christ is life, and in him you can find that quality of life that is eternal.

You see, one is not saved, or made whole, or given abundant life by believing certain theories about Christ. You can sit down and sign your name to all sorts of creeds and beliefs about Jesus Christ, and it doesn't mean a thing until you start finding in Christ a way of life you can live and find it abundant and eternal. Can you possibly deny that? Can you possibly believe the church is a group of people who get their beliefs all lined up with some ancient creed, and that's all there is to it?

III

Now maybe we're ready to think about what these lessons really mean. Well, to believe in the Anointed One, or the Christ, is to believe that he discovered a way of life that is life indeed, a way that makes you shout, "Eureka, I've found it"; a way of life that is truly a gift of joy.

But it is so different from our way and from the world's way. Life, he says—and demonstrates—only comes when you give it away. It comes when you are most self-forgetful. It comes when you are more concerned with others than with yourself. How strange! When you reach for life, grab for it, you lose it. When you hazard life, give it freely away, you find life. How strange, but how eternally true. He died at 33 and we only know about three years of his life, but what three years. He really lived!

He knew this could only be done with a certain kind of love, not the sloppy, sentimental kind of love you hear so much about today. Some groups today act as if they had discovered the stuff, but they are talking about a weak reflection of what Jesus was talking about. He never believed all evil would be overcome with a smile. He didn't think love

was something that automatically uncovered something beautiful in the most despicable character. In fact, he warned us that human beings could be terribly wretched and take advantage of your good will. He called such people some pretty harsh names: whited sepulchers, bleached bones, den of vipers, scoundrels, hypocrites. He told us they would turn on us and rend us. Did he not prove this with his own life—his death on the cross for his only crime of loving all? So, he was talking about something far deeper and more profound than the love we usually hear described. He said we really didn't know what love was until we discovered how God loved us. He showed us that God loved each of us not because we were loveable,—Heavens, no!—but because God knew we couldn't exist without his love. And he declared that when we know ourselves to be loved in this way, then occasionally we can forget self and love the unloveable ourselves, as a sort of reflection of the love God holds for each of our lives. It doesn't work the other way around: that when we love, out of our own will-power, then we discover God's love, or earn his love. No, the Scriptures are quite plain here: We can love because he first loved us.

And I could go on, but I've only tried to illustrate the truth we've been talking about. We are made whole, we taste of an eternal quality of existence when we live in the way Christ demonstrated. Nothing here at all about signing your name first to a set of beliefs. Nothing here at all about a guarantee of heaven if you subscribe to the correct creed. All of these lessons today are telling you where to find life!

Now maybe you've missed my point entirely. This morning I've tried to say that we misread the Scriptures quite often because we get caught in our own conceptual ruts. It seems to me all of these lessons are trying to offer you the one thing our faith has to offer: life, abundant life—life that has an eternal quality about it. God is offering you that life, and we believe his best offer has been made in Jesus Christ who lived to the full this life he was offering, lived it so dramat-

ically in his life and death, that we really cannot mistake it. It is a life that comes when we give ourselves away in love—the kind of love the anointed one has shown us in God. Can you escape your conceptual ruts enough to see that you can find this life and live it in Christ?

“What does the Lord require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep his commandments?” “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God . . . And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” “And this is eternal life, that they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ who thou hast sent.”

O God, who hast given us this new day and this new week, grant that, turning our backs upon the shadow of old failures and old ideas, we may turn our faces in new faith and courage toward that brighter life on which the light of thy redeeming purpose shines; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

8. A Genetic Accident

David K. Berlo

I have two or three points I would like to share with you tonight that come out of my study of communication. However, they are more applicable to you than they are to the discipline. Frankly, I choose not to discuss Michigan State with you except for two points: One, to wish you all success in the morning. Two, to hope that it will be possible, though it is extremely difficult in this complicated day and age, for those of you who belong at Michigan State to find out that you belong here, and for those of you who do not belong at

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This slightly edited address was delivered by Dr. Berlo to high school seniors of the nation who were participating in the fifteenth annual Michigan State University alumni scholarship competition, held on the M.S.U. campus in East Lansing, Michigan. The tape recording of this address can be secured from the audio-visual department of Michigan State University, East Lansing.

Michigan State to find out that you do not belong here.

I would also like to warn you of some things and express a concern that I have for you. First let me warn you. Through a genetic accident that gives you the ability to process information more rapidly than most people, you were endowed (through no fault of your own) with the capacity that in upper-middle-class-white-society we have referred to, somewhat euphemistically, as intelligence.

Many of you have middle-class parents who did not themselves go to the university, and therefore were willing to invest their lives to guarantee that you did, even though in the process they would risk being intimidated by you no later than the sixth grade. And many of them *have* been intimidated by you, as the parents of bright youngsters inevitably are. And you have been wooed and placed on a pedestal and idolized as the hope of tomorrow for this society. Now there are two aspects of respect and status. One is placing on a pedestal, and the other is providing the economic wherewithal to continue your existence.

Up to now, other than through the efforts of your parents, the wherewithal has been relatively minor and the pedestal has been extremely, and exhilaratingly, high. You are about to leave high school and enter the university. Let me warn you of something. The wherewithal, as you heard tonight and have been hearing from universities all over the country, is about to become at your disposal. But the pedestal is about to be shattered, once and for all. You are beginning to enter into that phase of your life where potential is assumed, and intelligence is a given, and accomplishment is the *only* criterion on which accolades and pedestals are provided.

It is a very frustrating experience for you because you are all used to being at the top of the heap. And do you realize that if you had been born into a community that had the parents of the 600 of you, 400 of you, by definition, would be known as average? And it is that kind of environmental change that you are about to embark on.

Many of you will become very disillusioned. I urge you only to remember when it comes—and it shall come to most of you—that it is inevitable and that it, too, will pass. You need to step back and realize that it is habit patterns and values that are undergoing change. And that there is nothing wrong with you, and that there is nothing wrong with the institution you have affiliated with. It is the nature of change that produces this temporary depression.

But I would like to help you by depressing you a little earlier, because I have serious questions in my mind as to whether all of this is worth it. As you know, the wherewithal for your education is coming from the society. The society is investing in you and investing heavily. It is investing its money, its status, and it's investing a large number of its resources in your future and in your life. Now there is only one reason that a rational society invests, and that is that it intends to secure a return on its investment.

I raise a serious question with you and within my own mind as to whether sheer brain power is worthy of the investment of society. We have been investing in brain power with no questions asked for a long period of time. Most of the catastrophe that is potentially upon us has been produced through the minds of the advanced technological cultures of educated society.

There would be no population explosion without education. There would be no nuclear potential without education. There would be no destruction of the environment without education. There would be no rise of social-psychiatric disorders without education. It is the undisciplined and the irresponsible nurturing of the mind of man that has, in this century, acceleratingly produced the potentiality of instantaneous total destruction. And I ask *why* are we investing in that resource.

Why brainpower? Why not brawn? There is energy that is needed in society. Why should we not invest in physical skill? Why not motor skills? There are a variety of motor

skills at our disposal. Why should we not invite into this room tonight the 600 people who have the best manual dexterity in the graduating classes? Why not managerial know-how? We are in terribly short supply of people who have the commitment and ability to manage the systems which men have created. Why not all of these things other than sheer genetic potential to process information rapidly?

You are those to whom much has been given. If you are white-middle-class, a significant predictor of your presence here tonight is sheer genetic accident. If you are lower class, economically, a single predictor here is the dedication and willingness of your parents to sacrifice much of the joy of their own lives to provide you with alternatives. If you are black, brown, or red, the best single predictor here is that you happened to be born in the right time or in the right place. There are many thousands of young men and women today with all the genetic potential you have, who have never had a chance to be in this room, though they are in no way deficient to you, as single human beings.

What are the returns that we expect? I would suggest to you that there are three returns. The first is we expect that you *will* develop your brainpower to the utmost potential, recognizing that the only role for you to play is the attempt to solve problems for which there are no correct answers. Because we have now invented machines which are more capable than man of solving problems for which there *are* correct answers. If the problem can be specified, the computer is superior to the human mind. If the problem has no right answer, only humans can attack it. So we hope you will exploit that brainpower. However, I hope you will also recognize that working, even with one's brain, is only one of the things that educated persons do.

Second, we expect that you will allocate a significant portion of your energy to those problems which are, in fact, facing society at the moment. And one of the things that disturbs me most with the young people whom I know, and

the older people with whom I'm acquainted, is that those of superior intellectual capacity tend somehow to think that it makes them of superior worth and superior value. Though they may plead for social justice and the helping of the un-gifted, they choose not to enter the arena to dirty their hands with those who are not as educated as they. So we expect you, in this time of juxtaposition of revolutions, to *become* involved.

Where are we in revolutions? It is not only a difference in degree; it is a difference in kind. I won't review the details. Many of you know them better than I. Look at the situation of population. We are rapidly approaching the point where civilizations will have to sign treaties with each other: "We promise not to increase our population more than 1.7% if you promise not to increase your population by more than 1.7%." The gross national product of the world is going up significantly slower than the gross national people.

We have been practicing population control for some time. Man has always practiced it in one form or another. I grow weary of those today who question whether we should practice population control. You know the main methods: war, famine, pestilence. They controlled the population quite adequately for well over four thousand years. Then man, through technology, began to tamper with the death cycle. People who ordinarily and historically would have died or never been born, were kept alive and made to be born. Today we have tampered with the death cycle to the point where the trends in population have outrun all kinds of reasoning. If we don't attend to this and attend to it *now* with a massive education program and a massive information program, we will have no chance, because the revolution is irreversible.

Obviously the theme of the seventies is going to be remedying the ecology of the environment. Man is polluting himself, his air, his water, his physical resources, and his psychological resources with acceleration. We are in a revolution of energy. One of the things that frustrates me about my age

is that I can't know, as you know, what it is like to be born into a world in which nuclear energy preceded you. Except I can see the difference, just as I can in technology.

We're in a revolution in transportation. Between the year 4,000 B.C. and the year 1850 A.D. there was no alteration in the speed with which man could get from place to place. Now we literally move so fast that the physiology of the body finds it increasingly difficult to recover.

We have a revolution in medicine. We are rapidly producing illiteracy among physicians. Our research output increases, and the available energy of the physician decreases to the point where I will not go to a physician who has been out of school more than eight or ten years, because I know he is incompetent, by definition. All through history the basic question before man has been "What is immortality?" Today, when it is increasingly possible for a man to have the heart of one human being, the lung of a second, the liver of a third, the spleen of a fourth, the question becomes, "What is *mortality*, and who am I and what is personality?" A question we have not yet come to grips with.

Certainly we have a communications revolution. Thanks to television, this is the first time in the history of the world where the have-nots are aware of their status, and they don't like it. In fact, they are not going to put up with it. We're at the point where instantaneous communication makes error impossible in matters of import—where the president of the United States and the head of the Soviet Union have to set up an "I didn't mean it" line to protect themselves from disaster. We're at the point where you can wander through a rural area of Colombia, South America, and as you pull into a village in the afternoon you find the women of that village running to greet you. They are crying, and they say they do not know how to tell you that your president is dead; he has been assassinated. And a rural, illiterate, \$70-a-year-income campesino in rural Colombia knows that he is dead. It is two-thirty in the afternoon, and he has only been dead

for an hour and fifteen minutes. Those are the implications of the communications revolution.

So we have a variety of revolutions and probably the most important of all, and one that we really have not come to grips with, is the information revolution. All through history, the basic process that has occupied man's primary attention has been the movement of matter and energy. And it is only in this century that we have seriously considered the proposition that if one imposes pattern on matter-energy, and if one moves that pattern rather than moving the matter and energy itself, one can control the world with little energy.

One can control through pattern (or information) which is why the information sciences and the control sciences have moved so rapidly in this century. We are moving so fast in the area of information that most of you will be obsolete in the majority of your disciplines before you finish your graduate education. Any person today who says he is up in his field is in a decadent discipline—because in any field worthy of itself, information is moving faster than absorption permits.

We recognize too, that for the first time in history, two propositions are true that have never been true before. It is no longer possible for you or for me, or for anyone else, to store in our minds everything that we need to know in order to do our job. We have learned too much to store in our own memory banks. And at the same time, it is no longer necessary for us to store information because memory banks can now be made.

I look for the day to come when you will check into this university, and after we find out your field, we will tell you to go to the bookstore and buy a memory. And in that memory will be stored everything that is known in your field of specialization. And we will sign a contract with you for life in which we say, "Every June when the faculty meetings are over for the year, if you will send us your memory, we will erase all of the things that have been found to be false

during the year, and add to it all of the things that have been found to be true, and we will mail it back to you so that it is ready for you by the first of September." I sincerely believe that day is rapidly coming.

Therefore there is no point to an education that tries to imprint upon the human being things which need to be remembered. But rather, the goal of education is to teach persons not to store information, but to process it; not to become a retrieval system, but to enter into dialogue with a retrieval system. But I don't know how to teach that yet. And I don't know anyone else that knows either. And I don't think you know how to learn that way. I don't think you know anyone else who knows how to learn that way. But I do know that the whole method of teaching and learning that has produced you and me is now obsolete.

We are in that dilemma together, and it is no time for us to be fighting each other over who is in charge; when, in fact, we must be working together because there is nothing happening that begins to approximate what ought to be going on. That's the information revolution. And yet, what do we find in this century? We are totally reliant on information.

My grandmother knows very little; she is illiterate. She neither reads nor writes; she had a fifth grade education. She knows very little; she has only been out of her home once and that's when she came to visit me. After looking around here in the winter she decided she hadn't missed anything and has never traveled from her home again. But what my grandmother knows, she knows she knows, because she has experienced it. My three children know more than their great-grandmother will ever know. My third grade daughter knows more today than King Solomon knew when he died. There is only one problem—they know practically nothing that they know, other than the fact that somebody told them. And you know very little of what you know firsthand, because you have learned it all through information, not through experience.

And yet, the crowning dilemma of the twentieth century is the statement that everything is relative; that all information is biased through the eyes of the beholder; that you can't tell it like it is; that the only way to have an open mind is to have an empty head; that Aristotle was wrong when he said, "To say of what is that it is, or to say of what is not, that it is not, it is true." You can't do that.

Walter Cronkite is a friend of mine and I write and talk with him on occasion. I said once, "Walter, please don't end the newscast saying 'That's the way it is, Friday, February 13.' Why don't you come up to grips with modern research and say, 'Ladies and gentlemen, that's the way we see it, here on the thirty-seventh floor of the CBS building, in full knowledge of the sponsorship of the program, the consumptive economy in which we work, the professional feelings of the staff, the biases that I have as a man in my fifties, the time at my disposal, and the whims of the cameraman.'"

Because *that's* the way it is. The way it is, is that you can't tell it the way it is; you can only tell it the way you see it. Know the truth and the truth shall make you blind in many ways.

And so we find that at the moment in history when we become totally dependent upon information, we can't trust it. All through history when we really didn't need it we had total faith in it. The First Amendment is based on that assumption; it's based on a fallacious John Stuart Mill-John Milton idea that, "Truth has a power of its own." Nonsense!

Control the information channel and you will control the minds of man. Because I can bias information in ways that you will never know. One of the most frustrating times of my life was a night about three years ago when I had the opportunity to spend the evening in a small group with a gentleman from Arizona, Barry Goldwater. I found him urbane, charming, sophisticated, informed, intellectual, and caring. And I said to myself, "My God, what have they done, to change a total picture of a man like that?"

I saw Lyndon Johnson in interview number two with Walter Cronkite, and I saw Lyndon Johnson as President of the United States—those are two different Lyndon Johnsons to me. And I say, “Who is the real Lyndon Johnson? Who is the real Barry Goldwater?” We don’t realize the fantastic extent to which everyone in this room has been biased, prejudiced, and brought to given points of view, because of the inherent nature of the information process.

So that’s why I urge you to recognize the word “competent.” Even though I support dissent *and* conservatism I urge many of you to seek the third role in society. And that is to get in the middle of the stream and help some of the rest of us try to figure out how we can manage ourselves, so we can exist and become significant human beings in an extremely complicated world. This is what we need more than anything today in attacking the problems of society: people who are problem-centered, not people who are self-centered; people who are people-oriented, not people who are solely discipline-oriented; people who are interested in the utilization of competence, not simply in its acquisition; and people who realize that the highest status in a free society must come from those who are delivering on that which is expected, not simply those to whom much has been given.

So that is the second aspect of the return on our investment that I commend to you. And let me then turn to the third, the one that is troubling me most deeply. To me, the purpose of life is the development of a whole human being. Not the development of solely an intellect, not the development solely of a muscle, not the development of status within society; but whole people who are not socially inept, who have high self-esteem, who have the self-love that is a necessary prerequisite to humility, who recognize what the prerequisites are in the search for meaningfulness and significance in our time.

Now roughly, as I trace the history of man, there are three

values that have come in order. For many, many centuries, the main value of man was fatalistic—God's will be done; Allah be praised; reward shall come to me in the hereafter; the more miserable I am at the moment, the better my deserts will be later.

And then, around the fifteenth or sixteenth century, man began to realize that, "You know I don't have to succumb to this system; I can fight back; I can cope; I can seek and acquire power." And so, for the past 400 years the main goal of the educated man has been power acquisition, dominance, coping, fighting back; and therefore, the main goal of success in life has been power position, status, dominance, and managerial rank.

But now we are realizing that man not only has the power to fight back, but the whole concept of reality is no longer a given; it is now something that each person can build for himself. It's not only that I can control the system in which I find myself, it's that I can *make* the system in which I find myself. What's real to me is real to me, and therefore I am constructing reality just like the artist, the painter.

So, as the journalist, scientist, and the humanist, we are all now in the business of building the whole concept of the universe in which we shall live, at which point the concept of power begins to seem relatively trivial. As we saw that spaceship receding from the earth, and as we saw the earth becoming a smaller and smaller unsupported ball in the middle of an infinite universe, it seemed awfully silly to brag about having become chairman of the curriculum committee at Michigan State University. Or being in charge of an organization where thirty-four people jump when I tell them what to do, as I heard a distinguished friend of mine say just a few days ago. The key value of your generation is not power nor fatalism, but meaningfulness and significance. And this is why so many of you are in so much trouble, because for several centuries now we have been asking, "Where am

I going?" And now we realize that the question is not "Where am I going?" but "What am I becoming?" and "What am I doing?"

And yet the tragedy is that during all these centuries of the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment we have had God at our disposal and didn't seem to need him very much. Why? Because I don't need God to tell me how well I am doing in the mind of man; man can tell me that. But when it is not power that I seek, but meaningfulness, man cannot tell me what is meaningful. Only values that transcend man can tell me that. As those of you in science know, no system can be validated by data within the system. Therefore, if the system you are looking to validate is the system called mankind, one must remove himself from mankind to get validating information.

One of the challenges I give to you is something that is so desperately needed in this society, namely the rearticulation of values which transcend situations. One cannot rest with situational ethics in a relativistic, physical universe. And this is partly why you are in the dilemma you're in, and why I find so many people who don't seem to be having much fun anymore, who don't seem to be seeing life as an experience.

We have learned we cannot only affect reality, but we can build it. Through technology we have developed systems so fantastically complex, so frustrating, that most of us feel that we cannot affect the system at all. As we have relied on information and have been given more options and fewer criteria on which to choose options, it has been inevitable that we become more and more "up-tight," more and more confused, more and more tense, because we know not where we go, much less what we become.

And of course this tension is accompanied by another communication change in our time, namely the desire for openness, for honesty. This frightens me as well, because the prerequisite of interpersonal openness is personal self-esteem. If I do not have the confidence that I am a unique

human being, that I am of significance—not because of what I have done but simply because I am—if I have not that value at my disposal, it is impossible for me to be open with you about you or about me or about anything else.

So I urge those of you who have not yet come to grips with the realization that you *are* uniquely significant, to seek that realization through whatever means and whatever values you choose. I urge upon you as you enter the university to fight hard for propositions, but to fight gently because inherently you are in error. The communication ethic of our time makes us realize that to be human is to communicate, that one cannot be a human being and be deprived of social interaction. The principle of relativity makes clear to us that when I do communicate, I will often be in error because my own past experiences and my own biases inherently color my perceptions and my thoughts. Social science research makes it clear to us that when I am in error I will often win, and that people will often do as I tell them to even though I am wrong. And that's the way it is. Because I have no choice as a human being but to influence other human beings, in error, successfully.

And so it becomes clear to me that I am my brother's keeper, just as he is mine. I can't do my own thing because I am part of you just as you are part of me. Therefore I must learn, as I hope those of you who have not yet learned it will learn, that the investment that is placed in you has, as necessary return, your own intellectual growth, your own contribution to your society, your own personal growth as a human being. But probably most important, that you will learn to love yourself so that you have the capacity to love one another.

9. Spoken Communication for Facility

B. F. Jackson, Jr.

Although there will always be a need for the church to use spoken communication for advocacy, there is another important need to use oral communication as a facility. The role of the church is to bring people together to talk about values. A major role of the church today is to try to help people articulate a set of values under which they can grow as humans. People are hungry to discuss in the presence of others such questions as, "What do I want?" and "What do I hold dear?"

One of the chief goals of human communication is interaction. The image of the church as a place one goes to interact with others should be encouraged. When communication becomes fragile, as it has in so many instances, then there is all the more reason for continued dialogue.

It sometimes appears that the most sensitive areas in life are often the least discussed. If we are to ever capture integrity, as people, we must create a climate conducive to freedom of expression. Trust must overcome fear.¹

¹ Meryl Ruoss, *Citizen Power and Social Change: The Challenge to Churches* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1968), pp. 92-93.

Some clergymen are ready to serve as facilitators of this kind of congregational meeting, but it is a quite different role than that of "preacher." Sometimes a layman will be a better facilitator with the minister in the role of participant. The important thing is that whoever serves as facilitator must be a skilled conflict resolver, a competent questioner, an interrogator; he must serve as stimulus, catalyst, and have a sincere belief and trust in people.

Spoken communication as facility can be illustrated by the differing approaches made by two community development consultants.

The first consultant goes into a community and does careful research to find out what the needs of the community are. He finds in his study that the community has a serious need for a swimming pool. Therefore, he carefully organizes the community into a group which wants a swimming pool and then takes steps to build that pool. When the pool is constructed, the consultant's work is done, and he goes on to his next assignment.

There is a second kind of consultant. His approach is something like this: "I don't know what these people really need, but I am sure they need something." For one thing, he observes that there seems to be no concept of community. Thus the consultant acts as a facilitator. He calls the people together and helps them develop a concept of what it means to be a community. He has faith in this methodology and in the people, hoping that in the process of getting together they will be able to define their own needs. Of course, this approach may end up with the building of a swimming pool, but it may often lead in some other direction.

The church has often spent too much of its time and effort trying to define exactly where it is going and not enough emphasis on the existential process of getting there.

The purpose of spoken communication, when used as facility, is not to give people answers to their questions, but to help them find their own answers in the midst of dialogue.

In helping people seek their own answers numerous skills are required: creative listening, the introduction of relevant information, and the raising of pertinent questions that stimulate thinking. Someone in such a group should make sure that every available resource is both found and used.

The facilitator should not seek to bring agreement among persons who still have basic unresolved conflicts. Nor should the resolution of such disagreements be a high priority goal. Mutual understanding of true differences is important, and it is especially desirable to have a knowledge of the reasons behind each view in a radical disagreement. If agreement comes, it should be as a result of independent, self-deciding participation in a process that leads up to it.

In this context, oral communication is a means by which ideas and meanings are conveyed and received among individuals and groups. This does not ask that one consider his own ideas with any less conviction, but it does require viewing one's cause in relation to other points of view.

When people are brought together to talk about values and to find possible answers to important questions such as, "What do I want?" and "What do I hold dear?", it is important that they reach responsible decisions about these values and questions. Perhaps they will be only tentative decisions, but this is much better than refusing to come to grips with reality. A refusal to decide is a decision by default.

An additional value is that oral communication is essential to the development of a self-concept. A large number of authorities agree that an infant's self-concept is developed through communication.

Our self-concept is the set of expectations that we have about how we should behave in a given situation. We develop our self-concept through communication, through imitating and incorporating the roles of others. This is sometimes called the concept of the generalized other.

As we develop and mature, we construct a concept of self. Then we operate on it. Gradually we learn to put ourselves

in the other person's shoes, to perceive the world as he sees it. In doing this, we develop the concept of self that we use to make inferences about others. When two people interact they try to predict how the other will respond. The goal of interaction is the merger of self and other, a complete ability to anticipate, predict, and behave in accordance with the joint needs of self and other.²

A church group which has come together to discuss values should afford the kind of continuing opportunity for oral communication which will enable the self-concept to develop, be maintained, and change. In order for this to happen, the environment needs to continually accept the person as a valid communicator. If within such a friendly group we are respected, and if our ideas are thought to be of value, then we find it possible to have this same respect for ourselves and to value our expressed ideas even more highly.

However, a person begins to lose his ability to communicate with others if he is a part of a group which, by its actions, causes him to lose his self-identity or to have it destroyed or weakened. Any group or organization attempting to use oral communication for facility must consciously work toward developing the selfhood of its members. If feelings of significance and meaningfulness are to result, the maintenance of such a healthy self-image requires reinforcement from understanding friends. Whereas many kinds of experiences are helpful in this process, meaningful communication is one of the therapies most universally responded to. Just as the concept of self develops out of communication in the beginning, communication continues to be necessary to maintain this self-concept.

Spoken communication is also a basic tool for the establishment of interpersonal relations. Just as we develop our self-concept through communication, the concept of the *other* is created and maintained through the same process.

²David K. Berlo, *The Process of Communication* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. 127-131.

"The self exists only in dynamic relation with the other . . . [it] is constituted by its relation to the other . . . it has its being in its relationships; and this relationship is necessarily personal."³ The combined necessity *of* and capacity *for* communication lead to the natural need for an interpersonal group in which this need can be met. And just as the healthy-minded individual requires this communication activity in a group, the health of the group is also a result of having in it a sufficient number of individuals who find meaning and value in interpersonal communication. The interpersonal style a group has, the ways in which people relate to one another, and the systems of communication used to maintain or change these relationships, are among the unique characteristics which make groups different from each other.⁴ Actually, this may be a new and different way to characterize a church, rather than by the size of its membership or the amount of its budget. What more important question could be asked about a church than, "What kind of interpersonal communication takes place within the group?"

Some of the best ideas about groups in which oral communication is used as a facility for the discussion of values may come from persons who have worked in the area of community development consultation. In *The Community Development Process*, William Biddle has a chapter on "Relation to Religion." He holds that religious thinking cannot be ignored because it is so basic to all hopes of human development. However, he feels that there is a reluctance on the part of many religious workers to trust ordinary people to make ethically good choices. They place entirely too much reliance on their own ability because they do not have a working belief in the potential that could develop if they relied on the best judgment of the people with whom they are

³ John MacMurray, *Persons in Relation* (New York: Harper's, 1961), p. 17.

⁴ Many of these ideas are discussed in an unpublished paper by David K. Berlo.

working. Biddle does not believe that religious workers have been convinced that better choices are made by groups which have considered, with understanding, a wide range of alternatives. There is a genuine need for more religious workers to find that they can serve in a new role—that of an “encourager”—in assisting a group to use oral communication as a facility.⁵

It is all too evident that many churchmen, whether clergymen or laymen, find great satisfaction from words. Words, whether proclaimed from the pulpit or uttered in conversation, can become a means of enabling us to overlook our need to find a process which will make it possible for us to implement the ideas talked about with such passion. The person who is the facilitator in such a process should be one who puts human needs first. As important as doctrine and creed may be, they should not be allowed to overshadow loyalty to the ethical imperatives of one's religion. And great skill will be needed if the facilitator is to help people examine and evaluate their conduct, and the conduct of others, by these imperatives. It takes a great deal of faith in the questing process in peoples' lives if this reliance is to be put above any program, however worthy. This faith may be more possible if a basic tenet of religion is followed: that the ultimate goodness in people will enable them to respond to encouragement given by a group to make a sincere effort to search for meaning.

In speaking of the person who is to lead such a process, Biddle gives him the name of *Encourager* and says that he is not “a change agent, in the sense of an advocate of (to him) favorable change. He is, rather, the expeditor of the favorable changes that people have chosen.”⁶

An encourager instigates a growth of initiative that may run away from him. For he takes the initiative in starting

⁵ William W. Biddle, *The Community Development Process* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1965), pp. 231–243.

⁶ Biddle, *Community Development Process*, p. 260.

a process that increases people's independence from him. There is little precedent for American admiration of such a role. What people really require is to be encouraged to make decisions that meet their self-perceived needs.

Biddle ends his book with a list of fifteen characteristics which he feels an encourager should seek to exemplify. Six of these are worth mentioning here, not because they are unique, but because at least five of the six can be found elsewhere almost word for word. These characteristics are, we believe, the beginnings of a set of cardinal principles for the facilitator of spoken communication in the discussion of values.

SIX WAYS TO BE A GOOD ENCOURAGER

- (1.) An ability to put himself in other people's shoes, to see things from the other person's point of view—while retaining his own convictions.
- (2.) An "inner directness" of conviction that holds so surely to his own values that any emotional disturbances or demands for conformity are less likely.
- (3.) An ability to listen with attention and empathy. A conviction that there are processes by which values become operative in the lives of people.
- (4.) The skill to feed in ideas, questions, alternatives, without dominating or seeking credit. The purpose is to expedite the process of development for persons.
- (5.) An acceptance of conflict as an inevitable aspect of development. A welcome of differences of opinion that makes possible an invitation to others to be unafraid of conflict.
- (6.) A willingness to find personal satisfaction in

the achievements of the people even though this may mean lack of credit to himself.

Does the thinking in this chapter have a relation to the content of the previous chapter? It may be of value to see how the concepts in these different uses of oral communication are related. Let's listen to a layman describe a process which is taking place in his church. "In my church we have tried a very interesting experiment that I am sure many churches are trying. We have two services on Sunday and we promise people if they come to the early service that the total length will be less than thirty-five minutes.

"The provision is that when this service is over, you don't go home. We then go to another room, and meet in family groups. We ask 'What is there in that service that was worth my time, if anything?' It takes a while but after three or four months of this, it has become a very exciting gathering."

Most of us would prefer an "exciting gathering" to a dull, unexciting one. It seems evident that the church, both clergymen and laymen, need to make better use of all kinds of oral communication.

We should not overlook the point that source credibility also applies to spoken communication for facility. It applies in a quite different way, of course, but it would be a mistake to infer that the dimensions of credibility—*competence*, *trustworthiness* and *dynamism*—are not also at work in a serious discussion of values. In fact, it may well be that a minister who is willing to be a regular participant in such a group, may gain a more favorable reception from his parishioners in regard to one or more of the dimensions of his credibility. And it may follow that the minister's perception of the credibility of various ones of his people will grow. He may find that he has gained in his ability to believe in the ultimate goodness of the people with whom he is working.

10. Spoken Communication in Small Groups

Clyde H. Reid

The most important discovery of the 1960s and '70s in the field of small group psychology was the effect of human touch. Probably the most important single discovery prior to 1960 was the tendency of groups to mature through a series of distinct growth stages. Bennis and Shepard, in their research at M.I.T., found that groups have the potential to mature like persons, and the mature group is generally more productive and more satisfying.

This recent discovery of the role of touch has simply emerged. It cannot be credited to any one professional or research team, although the work of William Schutz, Bernard Gunther, and other Esalen-associated people has been prominent in spreading its impact. Let me try to put this insight in proposition form, with an invitation to the reader to test it in his or her own work with human groups:

When people are permitted and helped to touch each other physically, their communication tends to be more open, trusting and personal, with deeper listening and understanding. Interdependence is

reached more quickly and easily, with its fruits of higher morale and productivity.

There is another extremely important assertion about oral communication in groups which I am willing to make. It goes like this:

Oral communication must be rooted in silence, imagination, and in nonverbal experience. When it is not, then it tends to be anchored in anxiety or boredom.

I will leave these two assertions dangling in your imagination while I proceed to point out that oral communication in groups depends upon three primary factors. I will then return to my two propositions and discuss them further in the light of three key factors.

Oral communication in groups depends upon: (1) the group's structure and contract; (2) the leadership pattern in the group; and (3) the growth stage of the group at the time. I will discuss each in turn.

GROUP STRUCTURE AND CONTRACT

You are invited to join a small group which is going to meet at Carl Johnson's house next Tuesday at eight o'clock. Some immediate questions leap into your mind. What kind of group will it be? Is it going to be every Tuesday? Can I afford that much time? Can I even afford to give up next Tuesday and the plans I had, just to find out? How late will the group meet? What will they expect of me? Will I be exposed in some way? Will they want me to assume some leadership and take even more of my time? Who is in charge? What will we talk about? How many people will be there? Will they know more than I do? Will they be interesting?

The answers to these questions become important in shaping the member's attitudes and expectations. The answer to

each is important in shaping the structure of the group and the contract under which the group operates. And each of these factors will influence the nature and content of the oral communication in that group!

Let me illustrate. Suppose that Carl Johnson deeply desires a Bible study experience. So Carl invites some people he thinks might be interested in Bible study. He doesn't make it entirely clear, however, that Bible study is his primary interest. It just doesn't seem important to be that specific. So six people come to the first meeting on Tuesday night. Jim comes expecting someone to entertain him. He is prepared to sit back and enjoy the show. His oral communication is based on that expectation and he does not have much to say. His frustration grows as he finds others in the group turning to ask him what he thinks.

Joan and Bob come to the same meeting with the expectation of working out some of the problems in their marriage. They expect the group to be a personal sharing experience, and they are angered by those who don't seem to share that expectation. Their oral communication is influenced by these expectations and the fact that the contract for the group is not clear.

The concept of a group contract is drawn from the field of psychotherapy. The therapist or professional counselor usually establishes a contract or set of understandings between himself and his client early in their relationship. The contract may be for one additional session to explore the problem further. It may call for weekly sessions for six weeks and a reevaluation at that time. It may be a contract for long-term therapy three or five times a week. The contract usually stipulates the precise time of each meeting and contains some understanding of the fees to be paid. Similarly, groups should have clear contracts which spell out the terms of the relationship if the group is to be productive and creative. The nature of the group's interaction and oral communication will

be deeply affected by the clarity or unclarity of the contract. Contracts may be formal or informal, conscious or unconscious.

One of the fascinating features of small groups is their ability to agree formally on one contract, and to operate on the basis of some other unspoken understanding that violates the formal agreement.

Consider the factor of group size as it affects oral communication in the group. Suppose six people show up on Tuesday night at Carl Johnson's house. The chances are very high that all six persons will speak at the meeting. On the other hand, if eighteen persons show up, the chances are high that four or five will do most of the speaking and that several persons will leave without having said anything. If the group has no clear contract about how many may join, then the size may increase until the group becomes too large for personal sharing and personal investment. On the other hand, if numbers are the goal of the group and are consistent with its purpose, then an increase may be welcomed despite its impact on oral communication patterns.

The structure and size of the group, the expectations of group members, and the contract which governs the group's life all influence oral communication profoundly. One dimension of group structure which deserves separate treatment is that of leadership.

LEADERSHIP PATTERNS IN THE GROUP

If leadership in a small group is centered in one person who makes most basic decisions for the group and influences the behavior of the others, it is usually referred to as authoritarian leadership. In a group with this leadership style, oral communication is centered in the leader and in leader-follower exchanges. That is, a member may address a question or comment to the leader, and the leader responds. Communication between group members is limited, not encouraged in an authoritarian group.

There can also be groups in which the stated leader is overshadowed by a dominant member, who is in effect the leader. This may be a very talkative person who holds center stage by keeping his or her mouth moving. The dominant member may not be talkative, however, dominating by sheer force of personality or reputation. His power may reside in his financial standing or in the other members' fear of him. In such a case, the oral communication pattern in the group tends to revolve around his concerns and interests.

A third form of leadership common in small groups is shared leadership. This may be of two types—one in which the designated leader has yielded his central role so the group can evolve into a shared leadership pattern, and another in which the group has agreed that all are equally leaders. In groups with shared leadership that is genuinely accepted by all members, oral communication tends to be more productive and distributed among the group members more equally. In an authoritarian group, communication obviously is more highly focused in one person.

GROWTH STAGES IN SMALL GROUPS

When given the opportunity to influence the direction of their own life, small groups have a fascinating tendency to mature through a series of stages. These growth stages are strikingly similar to the maturing process of an individual human person.¹ This growth through stages can help us understand some of the oral communication patterns which emerge in groups, and which do not seem to make much sense otherwise. By understanding this maturing tendency of small groups, some behavior may be interpreted which has no logical explanation without the awareness of this theory.

Let us suppose that the six persons gathering at Carl Johnson's home for a small group meeting spend a frustrating

¹ For the original research upon which this discussion is based, see Warren G. Bennis and Herbert Shepard, "A Theory of Group Development," *Human Relations*, Vol. IX, No. 4 (1956), pp. 415-437.

evening. They state their convictions very forcefully, but do not seem to be listening to each other. Their oral communication comes in independent speeches which are not clearly connected to each other, do not flow from one to the other. Although Carl has called the group together, they do not pay much attention to him and reject his leadership bids. One can sense some hostility in the atmosphere and the communication is generally unproductive. These may be interpreted as characteristics of the counter-dependent stage of group life, a generally frustrating and unproductive time in which the original leader is rejected and a leadership struggle to replace him dominates the interaction.

When the designated leader grants a group some measure of freedom to determine its own life, a predictable pattern begins to emerge. The first stage one may observe is that of dependence, when a group gathers and looks to someone to provide leadership. Tell us what is going to happen, or tell us what to do now. Who is in charge? This is the mood at the inception of most groups, whether in the classroom or in the sanctuary. The dependence structure is appropriate for some situations, and some groups remain dependent throughout their life.

However, when the leader does not permit the group to remain dependent upon him and insists that the group begin to take some responsibility for its own life, a brief period of *resistance to freedom* emerges. This is parallel to the point where the parent tries to give the child some freedom, like leaving the child at nursery school for the first time. The reaction is the same. "Wait a minute. Don't do that. I'm not ready for all that responsibility. You stay in charge. I'm scared."

So resistance may be manifested in the small group when they become angry that the leader will not continue to lead, and push him to remain in charge. "That's what we hired you for!" The leader may be tempted to resume his authoritarian stance to satisfy the group and his own longings for

authority. But if he continues to hold his ground and insist that the group help shape its own life, the group tends to move rapidly into counter-dependence. This is the frustrating teenage period in a group's life already described. The group is saying in effect, "All right, if you won't be our leader, to hell with you! We'll find our own leadership. We don't need you anyway."

Counter-dependence is a difficult time for the leader. He will feel hurt at the group's rejection of him, just as the parent feels hurt by his teenager's rejection of him and his style of life. But the pain is usually worth bearing, as the group begins to discover its own strength and leadership potential without him. In each of these stages, oral communication is deeply affected by the emotional mood of the group.

If the original leader is strong enough to let go and permit the group to grow through its adolescent counter-dependent phase, and if the group makes a crucial decision and finds the strength to move ahead, there tends to be a brief period of celebration, a phase I call independence. The independence stage is characterized by an atmosphere of joy, laughter, and irresponsible goofing-off. No work gets done as the group celebrates its independence from the leader. Oral communication in this phase tends to be light, humorous, and manic.

Once the group has declared its independence and celebrated it for awhile, it is ready for a more serious, sober, productive, creative period called interdependence. In this more mature stage of group life, leadership tends to be shared and the original leader is allowed to make his contribution along with everyone else. The comparable period in individual growth is the point where the child returns home after having established his adult independence and adult life. He or she relates to mother and father in a new way. Both are adults now, and while the parent is still parent, the child is no longer a child.

Oral communication in the interdependent stage is less hectic, less anxious, more serious, and people listen to each

other. The contrast between interdependence and counter-dependence is amazing when you look at the quality of communication. The contrast makes little sense without the understanding of these growth stages and the distinct emotional climates that accompany them.²

THE EFFECT OF HUMAN TOUCH

I now return to my first assertion—that the role of human touch is the most important discovery in recent years in small group research. When people touch each other (without abusing the privilege by inappropriate touching), their communication tends to be more open, more trusting, and more personal. But, you may ask, why should we be concerned with a nonverbal activity like touching in a chapter on oral communication? I'm glad you raised that question.

The fact is that oral communication and nonverbal communication cannot be separated—for an excellent reason. They cannot be separated because the human being is not just a headless orator belching out oral messages. He is also a physical being with a body and feelings. His body communicates constantly, and his senses are open to receive messages constantly. His senses tell him people are listening or not listening, people are caring or not caring.

In my experience, I have found that groups which are helped to touch—by linking hands in a circle, by sculpting faces, by many methods—these groups tend to move much more rapidly and easily to maturity or interdependence. This means, consequently, that those groups which include touching tend to move to more productive, creative communication much more quickly. In groups which do not touch, there tends to be more counter-dependent behavior with quarreling and non-listening. I'm not sure of all the reasons why this is so. I can only report from long experience that it is so, and that the difference is dramatic.

² For a more complete discussion of this subject, see my book, *Groups Alive—Church Alive*, Harper & Row, 1969.

Let me offer an illustration of the difference it seems to make. I once worked with a group of clergy and theology students who seemed to have some difficulty trusting each other and were expressing rather typical counter-dependent behavior. They talked a good deal about peripheral issues, blamed each other for the group's irrelevance, and had problems with leadership. I asked myself what was going on with this group. My diagnosis was an advanced case of counter-dependence with a minor in distrust. I then realized that this particular group had not done much touching. My prescription: a fantasy experience to deal with mistrust and defensiveness and an experience of touching.

When the group met next time, I assumed rather strong assertive leadership (moving them back to dependence for this session) and introduced a microlab for that session as though the group were starting over from scratch. I asked the group members to sit in a circle on the floor and close their eyes. I told them to imagine a pile of armor on the floor in front of them. It is their armor. It could be made of any material from cellophane to chain steel—that was up to their imagination. I then suggested that they put their armor on and engage another member of the group in a fight—all in fantasy, of course. We then opened our eyes and shared some of the fantasies we had experienced.

One member spoke of his styrofoam armor. Another described his ordeal as he tried to squeeze his six-foot two-inch frame into a suit of armor about five-foot six, one he had seen in a museum somewhere. Another talked about what happened as he rushed out to the center to engage a fellow student. They bounced into each other and both fell back onto the floor on their backs, helpless. After the descriptions were concluded, I pointed out that in no case had there been any report of someone actually trying to hurt another. I suggested that perhaps we didn't need our armor to defend ourselves from each other. We concluded that session with face sculpting. Each member takes about three minutes to

sculpt the face of another while he stands with eyes closed. They then turn-about before moving to sculpt another member of the group.

In face sculpting, one both gives and receives. It is possible to sculpt another's face (with the bare hands in this case) as though working mechanically with inert matter. The one receiving the sculpting usually feels as though he has been treated as an object in this case. However, it is also possible to sculpt another's face with thoughtfulness, warmth, and caring. This too communicates through the hands. I have rarely seen this experience fail to bring people closer together. It is helpful to allow time for the group to discuss their reactions to being touched and to being sculpted. They often share individual reactions. "Jack had the strongest hands; you really felt the strength of his personality through his hands." "I felt Bob was holding back, like it was distasteful to him to touch me." "I liked Betty the best. She really came through as a warm, human person."

When this group met the following week, the quality of their communication was greatly modified. There was openness in place of defensiveness. There was sharing in depth rather than superficial conversation. There was a feeling of closeness and high group morale. The marks of interdependence had replaced the counter-dependent behavior. Group members had gotten in touch with each other. The difference was amazing. (The group leader felt a lot better also.) The group still continued to have problems arise occasionally, but the overall quality of communication in the sessions was deeper and more meaningful. When they became superficial again, someone usually pointed it out quite directly and honestly; the group then tried to deal with the reasons why.

THE ROLE OF SILENCE IN ORAL COMMUNICATION

I want to add a few words about the role of silence in verbal communication in small groups. Many people are annoyed by silence. They feel awkward and do not know what

to do with silence. Yet silence occurs occasionally in group interaction. Suddenly, all noise ceases. The language dries up. The mouths stop moving. Some look anxiously around as if to say, "Won't someone say something?"

This silence can be either a tense, awkward silence, or a creative silence during which group members are reflecting, listening to the echoes of their minds, and waiting for fresh insights to emerge. Silence tends to be tense and awkward when it occurs during counter-dependent stages. It tends to be used more creatively when it occurs during interdependent phases of the group's life. How can we tell whether a silence has been awkward or creative? We can only tell by asking group members to express what they were feeling after the silence has been broken.

I believe there is an integral relationship between language and silence. Silence enriches oral communication. When we experience a continual flow of words or languages, it soon becomes tiresome and we begin turning it off and retreating inwardly for moments of relief. Speaking needs silence for its own refreshment. Speaking flows out of the silence and is more likely to be heard and more likely to be relevant because of the silence.

Max Picard, a Swiss writer, has reflected on this question:

When language is no longer related to silence, it loses its source of refreshment and renewal and therefore something of its substance. Language today seems to talk automatically, out of its own strength, and, emptying and scattering itself, it seems to be hastening to an end. There is something hard and obstinate in language today, as though it were making a great effort to remain alive in spite of its emptiness. . . . By taking it away from silence we have made language an orphan.³

³ Max Picard, *The World of Silence*, trans. Stanley Godman (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), p. 41.

There are many ways to introduce silence into the life of a group and thereby enrich the oral communication which follows. This is especially appropriate when the speaking in the group seems to have a quality of emptiness and irrelevance.

One way to move from words to silence is through the introduction of a nonverbal experience such as face sculpting or a group massage—the whole group gathers around one prone member pounding and massaging him. This is appropriate when the member has indicated loneliness or a feeling of not being cared about.

I will describe one situation in which an experience of silence radically changed the quality of the group's oral communication. The fantasy with the armor was one example of a silent experience having a profound impact on group life. I remember another occasion when I was advising one of three small groups in a conference on creative educational design. My small group, along with the others, had been given the assignment to create a tentative design for the rest of the conference and come back in an hour to report that tentative design.

The group spent most of the hour in fruitless discussion. They exhibited some typical counter-dependent behavior, fighting for leadership and not really listening to each other. With ten minutes left, the group had yet to make one decision. I proposed that they might try a meditation experiment. They agreed that it was a great idea, grasping at any straw at this point. I asked them to sit so their backs were straight. I asked them to close their eyes, breathe deeply, evenly, and see what images came.

We then stood and moved into a circle with arms on each other's shoulders, and shared some of the images we had seen. Some of them had no relation to the task of the group. I had not imposed any restrictions on the meditation. But some of the images did have a relation to our task. One man reported that he had seen the whole group doing something

rather strange, but he told us about it anyway. He said he had seen the group running out of the meeting hall and running down the hillside yelling at the top of our lungs. He was sure this had nothing to do with our assignment, but he was reporting what he had honestly seen.

Another member of the group said she felt that maybe the conference needed some livening up, and maybe Art's suggestion was just the thing. The group quickly agreed that they would like to try this, regardless of how strange it seemed. They also agreed that they wanted some chance afterwards to discuss the effect of this activity in the feelings of other conference members. After supper, when the entire conference group gathered again, Art stood and invited them all to join in a romp on the hillside. A wild melee ensued. Educators, clergymen, human relations trainers, all running down the hill and whooping at the top of their lungs, whirling each other around, expressing joy and exuberance. The effect seemed to loosen up the conference. It clearly increased the morale of my group. They had made a decision and carried it out successfully. By turning to a nonverbal fantasy or meditation experience, they had stopped talking and allowed silence to stimulate their imagination. The result had been a decision made in five minutes and a new approach to the quality of communication in the group.

The implications for these new insights into group behavior are most interesting. It appears that we can improve the quality of oral communication in groups by facilitating their movement toward interdependence. This growth to interdependence is made especially easy when group members can be helped to "get in touch" with each other. It needs to be pointed out, however, that the touch experience must be appropriate to the situation. If it is too unrelated to the emotional life of the group, it may be perceived as phony or artificial and hamper rather than help.

When we stop to ponder the counter-dependent behavior of diplomats in international peace discussions, it is an in-

teresting fantasy to envision these dignitaries sculpting each others' faces, or spending five minutes in meditation during a heated exchange. These proposals may sound far-fetched and extreme, but perhaps world peace is worth some experimentation. Surely, at levels of interaction closer to home, such as in local congregations of religious groups, the implications of these assertions are worth testing.

11. Communication and Ethics

David K. Berlo

There is a single key concept that underlies all communication. That is the concept of the relativity of meaning, the necessity of meanings being in people, the realization that they come from experience, that they're learned, that they are private, that they are not transmittible, that they're not communicable, and that that's the way it is.

I am returning to this basic concept to examine some of its implications for your own personal style in communication. There are many implications here for all of us.

It is important to recognize that the notion of objectivity is unattainable, that telling it like it is is not possible, that seeing the truth and reporting the truth is not available to man; in fact, concepts like *truth* and *fact* and *being* and *is* are no longer very relevant concepts in the absolute frame of reference in which we've held them historically.

Another implication of the relativity of meaning is the in-

This was given as a classroom lecture in Dr. Berlo's communication 100 course at Michigan State University. It may be secured on tape from the audiovisual department of Michigan State University, East Lansing.

evitability of distortion, of alteration in meaning and understanding, as information passes from one human being to another. It is correct to say (but we often don't understand the implications of the simple proposition), that every time information passes through human hands it is changed, altered, distorted. What is real to the participant is real to the participant and each of us imposes our own view of the world on that which we see.

The whole concept of relativity in the twentieth century has given rise to much of what we see in the society today: a general increase in uncertainty; a general concern with ambivalence and ambiguity; the lack of predictability in the system; an increasingly difficult way of winning or of getting through the system; or of knowing where we are going or what we are going to do. There are implications of this in all areas of our lives, but a very important implication is what it has to do with our own value system, our own style of communication.

What is appropriate behavior in the area of human communication? What are the ways, if any, which we, as citizens of a democratic society, should impose regulations and restrictions on the mass media of that society? In what way should we impose restrictions on our own behavior? What is it tolerable to do, one to another? What kind of practices should be inhibited, restricted, or punished? These are questions with which each of us must come to grips in our own way. But the avoidance of those questions cannot be tolerated, particularly when we have an understanding of the relativity notion and the inherent ambiguity which it produces.

Let's look first at the regulation of the mass media, of communication institutions. Historically, we've taken three different views of the extent to which we should regulate the output of communication institutions. In Western civilization, up until and including the time of Elizabeth, the main view of the government was that it should protect the people from the mass media. Therefore, producers of magazines or peri-

odical information were licensed, regulated, governed, and censored by the crown. Government took upon itself the view that it was the protector of the people from the institutions of communication.

In both England and America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, during the time of Enlightenment and the early development of the Age of Reason, there were men like Erskine, Mill, Milton, and others who found this regulatory procedure intolerable. They insisted on a basic concept of freedom of speech, freedom of press, and the right, in effect, to totally regulate themselves within the very narrow boundaries of libel and slander. We have phrases from Milton and Mill such as, "Whomsoever has seen truth vanquished in a fair fight," or that truth has a power of its own, or statements by young Jefferson that he preferred newspapers to government, even though his views changed with age.

This country developed in our founding institutions the concept of freedom of the press. The libertarian view, as this point of view was called, took the position that in an open marketplace of ideas where every man had access to the public mind, one could count on truth to have a power of its own, and that it would triumph. Also underlying the assumption of freedom of the press was the notion that there was not too much information being produced. There was no need to inhibit the production of information because man still lived in an information-deprived culture.

Until recent times, these concepts have remained the dominant ones in Western society. Even today, most of the owners and operators of communication institutions firmly believe that not only does the public have the right to know, but the press should have the unbridled and uncensored right to be their informant.

And yet since the late forties, there has been increasing suspicion that the notion of libertarianism and unbridled freedom of the press are not compatible with our increasing understanding of the nature of human behavior. For one thing,

the assumption of a free marketplace of ideas is fallacious. We know that every man does not have access to the public mind, that the economic requirements of establishing a newspaper, magazine, radio, or a television station put its operation far beyond the capacity of most of us. In our modern marketplace there is a small group of institutions, a small group of economic support, which controls the output of information.

Second, we have learned a great deal through social science research that negates the proposition that truth has a power of its own. Some people have said, "If you give me repetition with reinforcement and you take truth, I'll beat you nine times out of ten." Or when someone says, "Whoever sees truth vanquished in a fair fight" the social scientist raises his hand and says, "In the first place, there are very few fair fights, and in the second place, I often see truth vanquished." The Red Chinese understood this when they took the city of Seoul during the Korean war. They preferred to confiscate all of the radios, even though they owned the only transmitter in Seoul. They were afraid that some people would be exposed to other information, and they preferred ignorance to a lack of monopoly in the operation of the press.

Though one can differ with the Red Chinese philosophically, this certainly was good communication strategy.

So the assumption of an open marketplace of ideas is fallacious, as is the assumption of the inherent power of truth to win. Furthermore, we are rapidly moving from a society in which not enough information has been produced, into a society in which information as a commodity is being overproduced. When we look at the history of other production areas, we find that over-production eventually necessitates regulation.

It is within this frame—over-production of information, the lack of the power of truth, and the lack of an open marketplace of ideas—that we as citizens need to concern ourselves with the proper relationship among the media institutions, the

government, and the average citizen. This is a very crucial problem, and it will increase in significance and seriousness as more and more tools of control are developed and more and more information is produced. What is your view? What is your personal value system on the regulation of *public* information?

Let's turn to the question of interpersonal communication, one to another. Again, what is your style and your view as to how one person should treat another in a communication situation? If meanings are, in fact, in people, then we know that whenever you and I communicate, we will both be distorting that which we are reporting. Though we may strive for objectivity, all communication has inherent error. You will be telling me things that are not so. I will be telling you things that are not so. We both will be analyzing and organizing our information, but we both know that our own beliefs and our own values will trick our minds over and over again until we will see what we believe just as often as we will believe what we see.

We gather and organize information in order to help protect ourselves from these errors and fallacies. If one believes in the relativity of meaning, one must recognize that there is no way in which error can be eliminated from perception or from interpretation or from delivery. Every time we communicate there is error, and often we will be telling people that they should do things that are, in fact, not in their best interest. Communication research has made quite clear that one can persuade people to a point of view, whether or not that point of view is in the best interest of the receiver; the techniques of manipulation and of communication are such that we can overcome error and persuade, even though we are wrong; one person may get another to do his bidding, even when an objective person would say, "That would not be a desirable state of affairs."

In short, we are all manipulators, one of another, whether we intend to be or not. All communication has, as one of its

aspects or dimensions, social influence and social change, with or without intent, with or without correctness. And that's the fact that we have to reckon with. When we communicate, we will often be in error, and we will often win. We have no choice but to recognize that that kind of fragility and that kind of tentativeness is inherent in the system.

I find myself very much disturbed as I watch this society; as its young people come to grips with the inherent tentativeness and the inherent confusion in an open system, they take one or the other of two alternative paths. Some suggest that we destroy the system or disrupt it so severely that it cannot operate. Contrary to what many people think, this is a relatively small number of people. I am less concerned about them than I am the very large and, in my judgment, growing group of young people who refuse to stand up for their positions, who refuse to expose their views, who refuse to get involved unless they're very sure that they're safe and immune from harm.

The system can't tolerate this. If communication is fragile, then there is more and more need for lengthy and continued dialogue. If error is inherent, then there is no need to be ashamed or to cast blame or to feel insecure, threatened, or attacked because one utters an argument which later turns out to be incorrect. Open argument among reasonable persons is even more important when assuming relativity of meaning than it was under earlier assumptions that one could search for the inherent nature of truth.

And yet, this kind of openness, this kind of tentativeness, requires a very high self-esteem on the part of the participants. I am concerned that I do not see us as a society working to increase our self-esteem and our self-respect. If I cannot learn to love myself, I am totally incapable of learning to love another.

So what is our personal style? How will we articulate our values that relate to communication? In my opinion, in this time of high relativity there is an urgent need for us to reartic-

ulate absolute values which transcend situations. One cannot develop a guide or a map for his life if the criteria for decision must emerge from each and every situation in which he finds himself. If many of our traditional absolute values are in error, they need to be replaced. But they must be replaced with something, some set of criteria against which we can guide our own day-to-day behavior. This is particularly true in the area of communication. What are our choices as humans? One could say if all communication is fraught with error that maybe we should just quit communicating. But that's not possible, because to be human is to communicate. The sensory-deprivation research makes clear that if we deprive a person of social stimulation, his personality begins to peel off of him in layers, and he's soon reduced to the category of a vegetable. So we must communicate if we are to be human.

Even to have a concept of *self* requires intensive communication with others, because communication is one of the main inputs to our whole self-concept and self-development. So communicate we must. Then some might argue, "Well, you should never communicate unless you're certain that you're right." He who says that is either a fool or a knave, because there's no possibility of certainty if one is speaking about the physical world. Everything is, indeed, relative.

I remember once when I was in a debate in the West Indies with a distinguished professor from another university. He, on occasion, would qualify some of the things he said being "as he sees it." I never qualify things I say that way. Finally a question was raised from the audience, "Mr. Berlo, why is it that you don't qualify some of the things you say as only being as you see it?"

And I said, "Well, I don't think that's really the appropriate question. My colleague is the one who surprises me by qualifying some of the things he says on the basis that it's as he sees it. For in my view, everything I say is only as I see it because I do not have the capacity to tell it like it is."

So I realize, and I hope you realize that all communication is necessary and inherently in error; that we do not have the freedom, we do not have the choice to always be correct when we communicate.

Given that, then, many still fall back on the third rationalization that says, "Well, even if I'm in error, I can count on truth to triumph. I do not have to take responsibility for my listener or my reader, because if I am wrong he will be able to see that." That is not so. Truth doesn't win out; it does not have a peer of its own. There is not a free marketplace. We are all prisoners of those with whom, by chance, by design, or by intent, we come in communication contact with. And we will be influencing one another, in error, whether we choose to or not. It is true to say that I am my brother's keeper, but it is equally true to say the reciprocal; namely, that he is mine.

So you must choose your own communication style, your own value system for what is correct and incorrect, your own concern for what is appropriate or inappropriate. But as for mine, I am trying, as I age and grow, to come to grips with the proposition that as a human being I shall communicate; I shall be in error; and I shall win. And that's the way the world is.

And if it calls for anything, it seems to me it calls for us as human beings to increase our openness, to increase our tentativeness, to reduce our certainty, to increase our tolerance, and to increase our concern for the basic integrity of all of the points of view to which we are exposed.

PART TWO

Tape Recordings and Slides

1. Audio Tape: Medium for Innovation

Steve F. Jackson

The thesis of this chapter is that audio tape is a unique medium for use in the church's life, especially as churchmen seek to innovate and design new models of communication and learning. There are numerous factors which make audio tape unusually practical and valuable, and which allow it to be considered a medium for innovation. I will present some design possibilities, ideas for using tape for innovation, simple techniques for audio recording and editing, and recommendations concerning equipment selection.

TYPES OF TAPE CONFIGURATION

Several configurations are available for audio tape. The

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configuration most widely used in the past has been the open reel or reel-to-reel tape. When not in use, the tape is stored on one reel. For use, the full reel is placed on the recorder, the tape threaded through the record-playback mechanism and connected to an empty take-up reel. Most reel-to-reel recorders operate at standard tape speeds of $7\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{3}{4}$, or $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches per second.* The tape is a standard $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in width and there are three standard reel sizes of seven, five, and three inches. Although this format can be either stereo or monaural, the two are not compatible. It is impossible to play a stereo tape on a monaural recorder. The length of time that can be recorded on a tape varies greatly according to tape speed, number of recorded tracks, reel size, and type of tape.

The second configuration for tape is the endless-loop cartridge. It was developed for use in automobiles and consists of a cartridge with one reel of tape in an endless loop. The tape is drawn out of the center of the tape loop and returned to the outer edge. The tape speed is $3\frac{3}{4}$ and the width is $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. This format has very limited use as an innovative medium in the church. Serious limitations for our purposes are:

1. Playback units do not have record capability.
2. Tapes must be recorded by a lab.
3. Cartridges cannot be reversed and must run to the end at regular speed.

The third configuration, which is the most significant for use by churchmen, is the tape cassette. Although the newest, its popularity is increasing at an astounding rate. In 1970 4.7 million cassette recorders were sold, which represents over one-half the total market. The cassette, which is the French word for small cartridge, is actually a very small reel-to-reel tape. The cassette contains two hubs that the tape is wound around and to which it is permanently attached. Thus, the tape is recorded or played back as it travels from the full

* This excludes very inexpensive equipment which is not capstan driven, and variable speed and professional equipment which operate at fifteen inches per second.

hub to the take-up hub. Then the cassette is flipped over for use on the second track. The tape is 1/7 inch wide and travels 1 7/8 inches per second. The playing time for cassettes varies with the longest playing two hours (1 hour on each side).

Operationally, the cassette is far simpler than reel-to-reel since it does not have to be threaded but is simply dropped into place. Like reel-to-reel, the cassette has fast forward and fast reverse capability, but unlike reel-to-reel, it need not be re-wound before unloading. It can be taken out of the recorder at any point while recording or playing, and reloaded at the exact same place on the tape at a later date. Of great importance is the fact that the cassette has complete standardization. With few exceptions, there is only one size of cassette and one tape speed. There are stereo and monaural cassettes, but unlike reel-to-reel, the stereo and monaural are completely compatible so that stereo tapes can be played on monaural recorders and monaural tapes on stereo recorders. Initially, the slow speed of the cassette configuration was considered to greatly limit fidelity, but most persons continue to be amazed at the quality of sound being produced on cassettes today. Its fidelity is certainly adequate for use as a communication medium.

AUDIO TAPE AS A MEDIUM

"In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message."¹ Although there are vast implications surrounding this statement by Marshall McLuhan, there is also a very simple and practical truth. The medium is a message all of its own. When we choose to communicate with a group using an audio recording, our message begins before the tape starts to move.

¹ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1965), p. 7.

The dawn of the audio tape cassette makes audio recording a unique medium for innovation.

Indeed, the cassette is a new medium that must be dealt with in its own right, apart from audio tape in general. It is a medium with a message uniquely its own. Although it shares most of the advantages of reel-to-reel audio tape, it brings many new and significant qualities for communication innovations.

The tape cassette is a truly portable "go anywhere" medium. The portable (battery-operated) recorder, which is the most popular of the cassette recorders, is typically about the size of a cigar box. (Although cassette recorders only slightly larger than a package of king size cigarettes are available.) The cassette can easily fit into the palm of your hand. As a portable medium, it can be compared to the portable transistor radio. But a radio must always be programmed through a station, the receiver must be within range of that station and the message must be received by all users at the same time without ability to stop or back up.

The cassette recorder is very simple to operate. Cassettes can be changed in seconds and nearly every portable cassette unit is both a playback unit for programmed information and a recorder capable of giving feedback in response to the programmed material or capable of recording feedback or other data.

Not only are cassette recorders portable, they are also inexpensive. It is now possible to purchase a usable portable recorder between twenty and forty dollars, with some of these having an automatic level control on record and built-in AC adapters. This places the recorders cost at considerably less than most automobile radios and within easy reach of most families. They are reliable and serviceable communication tools.

The tape cassette is also inexpensive to program. Although there is no limit to how elaborate and expensive a program can become, it is possible to design and record on cassettes

significant and creative programs at very low cost. The actual tape cassettes are both inexpensive and reusable, making them very practical for distribution in quantities. Thus, it becomes possible for several groups or many persons to have the same program material at the same time.

In addition to these special characteristics, there are general characteristics of sound recording which are important as we consider tape as a medium for innovation. Erik Barnouw states that sound is an action medium. "Sounds make pictures. But unlike pictures on the printed page, a sound is always something happening. This is the dramatic secret of sound. While the eye can perceive things at rest, the ear cannot, therefore every sound says: 'action'." ² As churchmen, our communication must evoke action in the lives of persons and audio tape can help us in a unique way.

Here are some additional characteristics of recorded sound on tape:

1. Tape presentations can have great variety, including different sounds, music, voices, and dramatic action.

2. Tape can cross barriers of time and space, bringing events from the past and current data from widely separated geographic areas.

3. Tape is flexible and can be stopped and started again.

4. Tape can make an emotional impact.

5. Tape can bring realism to communication.

6. Tape communication leaves room for the listener's imagination to come alive. Although these are not all of the strengths of recorded sound, it becomes obvious that this medium offers powerful possibility for meaningful communication.

DESIGN POSSIBILITIES FOR INNOVATIONS USING AUDIO TAPE

PREPARING THE OBJECTIVE

We should always begin with a purpose and the necessity of

²Erik Barnouw, *Mass Communication* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 156.

stating this purpose as an objective. This point is emphasized by Donald P. Ely. "Decide upon specific objectives when you plan. Define objectives in behavioral terms—then select the materials and equipment to help solve the problem."³

Specific objectives are very important to any communication task, but as Ely stresses, they are of critical importance to communication efforts which involve any of the new media.

The most common use of the audio recorder by churchmen is to record group meetings or individual speeches. Unfortunately, this is often a poor use of time since there have been millions of hours of recording done in recent years which were never listened to again. The tape recorder is not automatically helpful, and in fact, can be a hindrance to communication when poorly used. A person should always remember that it takes as long to listen to a tape as to record it. Although recently there has been a speech compressor put on the market which condenses a speech to 60% of original length.

It is often helpful to record meetings and speeches if the recorder is quite clear about his objective and how he hopes to use the recording to support that objective.

Therefore, in innovations using audio tape, a significant amount of time and energy would be given to preparing objectives. The following, written especially for teachers, is also relevant for churchmen: "Everybody talks about defining educational objectives, but almost nobody does anything about it. Books on education often stress objectives, 'how to' papers on programming list, 'defining objectives' as a first point; and some training materials such as films and filmstrips contain a description of the 'objective.' But how often are educational units, whether large or small, prepared in response to the questions:

- 1) What is it we must teach?

³ "Facts and Fallacies About New Media In Education" in *Revolution in Teaching; New Theory, Technology, and Curricula*, ed. Alfred de Grazia, David A. Sohn (New York: Bantam Books, 1964), p. 50.

- 2) How will we know when we have taught it?
- 3) What materials and procedures will work best to teach what we wish to teach?"⁴

An Example

It may be helpful to deal with the preparation of audio tape presentations by using an example of a specific communication innovation design with a specific objective for the presentation. This example, and other design possibilities which follow, are not intended to be packaged plans. Rather they can serve as a catalyst for the development of ideas for audio tape innovation in other situations. The possibilities for using audio tape for more effective communication are endless and every situation is different.

The setting for our example is as follows: A leader in a church of five hundred members is appointed chairman of a group assigned to help them deal seriously with the problem of poverty in their city. After working with the assigned goal, the committee decides to start action by confronting every member of the congregation with the issues that surround poverty. The consensus is that this issue can be dealt with most creatively in small groups and the membership is divided into twenty-five groups of twenty persons each.

These groups will meet on the same night in different homes and all details for the meeting will be carefully planned. The overall objective for the meeting is as follows:

After the presentation is made, *each person* will:

1. List five groups mentioned in the presentation now working with the problems of poverty in their city.
2. Select one group from their list of five that seems the most interesting. Give two reasons why the one group was selected.
3. List three suggestions of what the church might do in

⁴Robert F. Mager, *Preparing Instructional Objectives* (Palo Alto, California: Fearon Publishers, 1962) p. 7.

response to the problems of poverty as defined by the overall presentation.

This exercise will help prepare you for thinking about the selection of media for overall presentations of any kind.

The chairman of the committee is asked to design these meetings. In order to make responsible choices, this leader must be aware and sensitive to the process of communication and learning. He also needs to be familiar with the various media and their strengths and weaknesses.

One very simple guide for planning any communication project is Lasswell's communications paradigm, "Who says what, in what channel, to whom, with what effect?"⁵

After he gives serious consideration to the objective, the chairman decides to use the audio cassette as the primary medium for this presentation. Some of his reasons are:

1. Since many groups are meeting at once, it is practical to design one tape presentation for use by *all the groups*. The small group leaders need to be responsible for leadership but not content. Duplicating separate cassette tapes of this presentation is a relatively simple matter.

2. Since the subject is complex and controversial, the presentation must be carefully timed and to the point. Audio tape is good for this.

3. The content for the meeting can be communicated better on tape than on any other available media. For instance, it would be difficult to communicate the feelings of persons experiencing the problems of poverty in written interviews.

4. Tape is an action medium, and our objective suggests action.

5. Feedback is essential for reaching this objective, and tape cassettes can bring feedback.

DESIGNING THE PRESENTATION

Any tape presentation should have a detailed outline, and

⁵ Harold D. Lasswell, "Communication as an Emerging Discipline," *AV Communication Review*, VI:4 (Fall, 1958) p. 250.

all tape segments should directly implement the outline of the presentation. A person should be wary of using good, even excellent, audio sections if they do not speak clearly to the outline and objective.

It is also important to have a basic understanding of communication and learning plus a practical understanding of group work. Audio presentations to a group never stand alone, but are a part of the whole experience.

In designing a tape presentation, the following factors should be kept in mind:

1. Persons find it very difficult to listen for long periods of time, so there is a critical need for feedback.
2. Variety will lengthen the attention span of the listeners.
3. Organization should be clear and simple so that the basic outline of the presentation is obvious to the listener.
4. Sharing the objective of the presentation may help persons focus attention on the major points.
5. When possible, use another medium to support tape presentations.
6. Keep in mind the great flexibility of audio tape and build these characteristics into the design.

Another possible design is for a whole meeting to be programmed on tape. The tape can introduce the evening, share the objective of the meeting, and give information concerning how and when they will be asked for feedback. The group can be divided into smaller discussion groups and called back together by taped instruction. Even the discussion can be timed by having the desired amount of blank tape running through the recorder. This method requires very precise planning, but when it is done well it can be a most creative and effective design.

An example of this basic approach is the "encounter tapes."⁶ They are mentioned here because of their creative

⁶ "Encounter Tapes for Personal Growth Groups," produced by Human Development Institute Inc., 20 Executive Park West, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30329.

design and successful use. The "encounter tapes" serve as leaders for small groups working in sensitivity training. The group is led through the whole experience by a trainer who is recorded on tape. The information and instructions for the group experience are given by this trainer. A great portion of the tape is composed of blank sections which run through the recorder to time the various exercises. These programmed tapes have proved very helpful for many groups and have opened up new areas of design for audio tape.

When the objective for a communication effort is extensive, the designer must take very seriously the listener's attention span and fatigue level. The question of length is always an important one. Whenever possible (and always on major presentations), a program should be tried out on someone to get reaction concerning its length and clarity. The length of a tape presentation varies depending on whether the audience is an individual or group, how large the group is, what the subject is, and many other factors.

The listeners' interest in the subject will make a great deal of difference. Most coin collectors would gladly listen to a well-prepared one hour tape on valuable coins. Yet, other persons would likely get bored in a few minutes. A tape presentation that is too long can block communication; therefore, the length is very important.

In any communication design, feedback is of utmost importance and the cassette is an excellent medium for feedback.

Feedback is that process which enables the source to gauge the effectiveness of his communication. It acts like the governor on a motor. It helps the communicator keep his redundancy level just right, so that his message does not become too slow (and boring) or too fast (and incomprehensible). If the communicator actively seeks feedback, he knows where he stands; yet most communicators actually

avoid feedback out of fear that weakness or failure will be exposed.

For feedback to be of value, it must be related to the goals and purposes of the communicator. But the communicator may not have a clear-cut statement of goals and purposes. This is another reason feedback often is avoided rather than sought. All effective communication calls for hammering out, in advance, a statement of goals and purposes in terms which can be measured. The best communication efforts often build provision for feedback directly into the original design.⁷

The sample design given above builds in feedback so that it can be measured not in writing, but through oral responses. Each group could record its feedback on the same cassette recorder used for the presentation. Some designs might build in feedback every few minutes during a single program. This can be accomplished simply by alternating a programmed cassette and a feedback cassette.

More attention has been given in this chapter to feedback than to other important ingredients of communication. This has been intentional because feedback is greatly lacking in so much of what churchmen do, and the tape cassette can be of great assistance here.

SOURCES FOR SOUND

The person who chooses audio tape for a communication medium has almost unlimited resources to choose from when designing a presentation. Some of the major categories of sources are listed, but specific possibilities are limited only by the imagination of the user.

⁷ William F. Fore, "Communication for Churchmen," *Communication—Learning for Churchmen*, ed. B. F. Jackson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 44.

RECORDING LIVE EVENTS

The use of the microphone to record narration of individuals or groups is an important possibility for any audio tape presentation. The purpose of a presentation that is recorded in this way will vary with the objective, the availability of other sources, and the amount of preparation time. As a rule, all crucial parts should be written specifically for the presentation and read as a narration. In addition, it is often helpful to have a particular person speaking directly to the audience on the stated objectives. In a presentation on poverty, a mayor might be asked for a statement concerning the priority of the poverty program in the city. Volunteers who personally know individuals experiencing poverty may be asked to interview these persons concerning their feelings about their present life, their prospects for the future, and their hopes for their children. The staff of a job training center may be willing to make a brief audio presentation about their work.

The recording of telephone conversations may be useful as a simple technique for getting taped information. A United States congressman may be happy to speak briefly on the poverty issue in a telephone conversation. Another possibility would be an interview with a leader of a state organization seeking legislation for the poor.

DISK RECORDINGS

Disk recordings are a major source for audio input because of the vast variety that is available. It is simple to record portions from a record library of a friend, or from the growing number of record loan libraries for education and entertainment.

The *Schwann Catalogue*⁸ is a listing of records for sale. It is available for use at libraries and record stores.

⁸ *Schwann*, published monthly by W. Schwann Inc., 137 Newbury Street, Boston.

A portion of a record containing live speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King could be used in a presentation on poverty. A folk song such as "They'll Know We Are Christian By Our Love" could serve as a musical theme for the presentation, playing portions at the beginning, during transitions, and at the end.

TAPE LIBRARIES

Certainly one of the rapidly growing sources for audio material is tape. Its potential content is much like the record medium, and many types of material found on records are also found on tape. However, the possibilities of tape go beyond those of records in some important ways. First, there is a great deal of material available from tape libraries that is not, and will not, be available on records. Included in this category are a great many educational materials such as major addresses by important persons in various disciplines, special interviews, and educational radio programs. The *National Audio Tape Catalog* lists a tape entitled, "The Negro Worker in the City," and another one called "The Last Citizen." A tape such as this will probably never be available on record even though it contains helpful information.

Tape listings that are particularly helpful to churchmen are *Reigner Recording Library*⁹ and *National Audio Tape Catalog*.¹⁰

Another important source of information is the tape library of a friend. If a friend taped an address that would be useful for a particular communication project, it is very simple to borrow the tape and copy the portion you need.

OTHER SOURCES FOR SOUND INPUTS

Radio and television offer many of the same content possibilities as tapes and records. The difficulty is in knowing

⁹ Reigner Recording Lab, Union Theological Seminary, 3401 Brook Road, Richmond, Virginia, 23227.

¹⁰ National Center for Audio Tape, Bureau of Audiovisual Instruction, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, 80302.

ahead of time what may be valuable in order to tape it. However, more and more, particularly on television, it is possible to plan in advance around programming. It is important to look ahead for program subjects and particular persons who may speak in a given area of concern. A recent television program on planned parenthood offered valuable audio information including facts and personal interviews with mothers who had found this service helpful. Such information would be most helpful in communicating what planned parenthood centers can do for the problem of poverty. News broadcasts on both radio and television have valuable audio information. A news program on the work of a committee on low-cost housing might be an excellent way to present the work of this group. Motion picture sound tracks are mentioned to emphasize that where there is an audio sound track, there is a potential source for audio information. The film, "That's Me,"¹¹ has a conversation between a social worker and a young adult that effectively communicates authentic feelings of the poor.

Many tape presentations may be designed as part of a multimedia presentation. Often the visuals may be provided by one or more slide projectors or a combination of slides and motion picture footage. On other occasions, the visuals may be overhead transparencies, opaque projections, live actors, puppets, or any combination of these. At other times non-projecteds may provide the visual content. In these multimedia presentations, all that we have said about preparing audio presentations holds true with the obvious adaptations. Although it should be easier to communicate effectively with the additional media, the visuals cannot be expected to carry a poor audio presentation.

ADDITIONAL SETTINGS FOR INNOVATIONS WITH AUDIO TAPE

The example of the poverty presentation utilizes one de-

¹¹ "That's Me." 16mm film, b&w, 15 minutes. Produced by Walker Stuart. Available from Contemporary/McGraw-Hill Films, 330 West 42nd Street, New York, New York 10036. Sale, \$150; rental, \$15.

sign which divides the whole congregation into sub-groups for one meeting and uses audio cassettes as the medium for communication. There are many other creative possibilities related to this design. A large group may decide to divide into long term sub-groups using the tape cassette as a continuing medium for communication. Sub-groups may share the responsibility of designing the presentation and be encouraged to take seriously the feedback from the previous meeting.

Another whole range of small group designs center around youth. Asking a group of youth to design and prepare a tape presentation for groups of adults has fascinating possibilities.

Innovative designs dealing with the task of orienting small groups of new persons in a church or organization may be helpful. Well-prepared tape presentations may give valuable information to new persons and help the leaders do a more responsible job. For instance, a tape on the history of a particular church or organization may be welcomed by new members. More difficult issues such as doctrine and belief can also be dealt with on tape. It may be best to avoid complete programming for new member groups because new persons need a more personal touch. However, certain portions can be prepared on tape to the advantage of the participant.

Audio tapes prepared for individual persons open up an exciting new world which uses the audio cassette as the medium for a two-way communication system. In this area it will be necessary to depend heavily upon the use of portable cassette recorders so the individual receivers can take advantage of the characteristics of the cassette medium. These innovations are based upon the presupposition that because cassette recorders are simple, portable, inexpensive to purchase, easy to program, and reliable, it is possible for an individual to own and use a cassette recorder.

On a national level, several churches, which have cassette communication systems in operation, are attempting to use the unique characteristics of recorded tape in creative ways.

Once a system is designed, there are endless ways it can be used with great variety. There can be a regular mailing of cassettes which go to all persons in the system. The cassettes can be kept by paying for their cost plus a small charge for duplication, or they can be returned to be used again—in this case there is a small duplication charge. In addition to regular mailings, other special presentations can be made available to members on a loan basis. Cassette communication systems on a smaller geographical basis are also in operation. These are similar to the national systems but with the advantages and disadvantages of a smaller geographical area.

Innovations at the local level, with tape cassette systems for individuals, are among the most exciting of all possibilities. Here the system can be used as an electronic means to support person-to-person communication. This helps alleviate the critical issues of time and varied schedules of churchmen. In a cassette system there are many opportunities to enable churchmen to take their Christian responsibility seriously. If a cassette system is used creatively with a congregation, it may cut out three-fourths of their meetings and help better prepare them for the few meetings that are held. There are numerous other sub-groups in any large congregation that could have their own cassette communication system.

If a congregation really takes seriously the needs of home-bound persons, a two-way cassette system can be an effective way of ministering to them. It may be irresponsible to supply these persons with recorded worship services and little else when two-way communication is possible. As much as anyone, home-bound persons need to be challenged and informed on life's issues. However, only presentations carefully prepared for their needs can do this. Furthermore, the church desperately needs feedback *from* and *between* home-bound persons. We need what they have to offer. We need their views and ideas as much or more than they need ours. By careful design, the tape feedback from these persons can be entered into the mainstream of the church's life. Such a com-

munication system should not be another item done by the pastor, but needs to be designed and programmed by lay persons. *If traditional approaches are scrapped and innovative designs developed*, other special need groups may be served by a cassette system.

And finally, a whole congregation may decide to create a cassette system with a recorder in every home. Many families already have a cassette recorder. If churchmen are turned loose to innovate new designs especially suited for their needs, remarkable things will result.

PREPARING TAPES FOR INDIVIDUAL USE

Individuals can stop the tape and go back more easily than groups, but they are also more likely to listen while they drive, do routine tasks, or eat meals. The suggestions given for preparing tapes for group use are relevant here. It is important also to take the objective seriously because the effectiveness of the communication depends heavily upon this. It is understood that a tape prepared for use by ten persons in a small system may not always have the preparation time and varied sources that a tape designed for use by five hundred persons will have. So again, it is important to be flexible and innovative.

OTHER USES OF AUDIO TAPE

Audio tape can serve as a tool for working in interpersonal communications. Here, tape is used more for evaluation than as a medium for communication. It may be wise to record a session and listen to it with the purpose of evaluating an individual's relationship to the group. For this to be helpful, use an evaluation instrument for personal participation in a group, as a guide for use of the tape. Most material written to help persons gain skill in group participation include such instruments. It is important to see the evaluation a tape can make possible as part of a systematic attempt to improve an individual's skills for participating in a group.

Still another purpose for recording a group session is to study the life and dynamics of the group as a whole. Again, some instrument for evaluation, such as a sociogram, is important. The group can evaluate persons' participation and group life together with the help of the replay of a taped session. It is important to note, however, that this type of evaluation can be extremely painful for persons in a group, and must be done with trained leadership and in a climate of love.

AUDIO TAPE IN CLASSROOM EDUCATION

Audio tape for Christian education has not been dealt with since many good sources are available and written especially for classroom teachers. Some of these sources are: Chapter 11, "The Tape Recorder in Audio Visual Materials: Their Nature and Use";¹² Chapter 9, "Radio and Recordings, A-V Instruction Materials and Methods";¹³ Chapter 16, "Radio and Recordings, Audiovisual Methods in Teaching."¹⁴ Everything that has been written in these chapters is relevant to the extent that it helps the teacher be free to innovate in the classroom through the use of audio tape.

PERSONAL USES OF TAPE

Tape can be used as an audio secretary to record minutes, as a method for an oral filing system, or to record brainstorming sessions. Letters on tape are a growing phenomenon since the cassette has become available. It can be mailed inexpensively and is as easy to address and mail as an envelope.

¹² Walter Arno Wittich and Charles Francis Schuller, *Audiovisual Materials: Their Nature and Use*, Third edition (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 292.

¹³ James W. Brown, Richard B. Lewis, and Fred F. Harclerod, *A-V Instruction Materials and Methods*, second edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), p. 189.

¹⁴ Edgar Dale, *Audiovisual Methods in Teaching*, third edition (New York: The Dryden Press, 1969), p. 474.

TECHNIQUES FOR AUDIO RECORDING AND EDITING

RECORDING FROM A MICROPHONE

Some suggestions for microphone recording are:

1. When recording a single voice, a microphone should be held a minimum of four inches away from the mouth. It is important to experiment with the distance.
2. It is often helpful to hold the microphone at an angle (up to ninety degrees) to the path of the spoken voice to avoid hissing sounds.
3. When recording without an automatic level control, the record volume should be carefully set to avoid too high a record level which causes distortion.
4. A microphone should not be placed directly on a hard surface. A pad can be placed between the microphone and the surface.

RECORDING FROM RECORDS, OTHER TAPES, RADIO, OR TV

Although useful recordings can sometimes be obtained by placing a microphone near a speaker, this is second best.

1. Most record players and tape recorders, and many radios and television sets, have extension speaker outlets or other outlets where a patch cord can be plugged in and then plugged directly to the recorder.
2. When an outlet is not available on the sound source, special clips can be quickly attached to the two wires going to the speaker and the other end of the cord can be plugged into the recorder. A variety of accessory cords are available for these two methods. The advantages are the exclusion of outside talking or other noise on the recording and the increased recording quality.

EDITING

There are two basic ways that a tape presentation can be put together from several sources.

1. Editing by splicing tapes together. The segments of the presentation are taped in any order and on any number of different tapes. The segments are then spliced together in order. This is done through a simple process using an inexpensive splicing tape. Directions for this process are found with any splicing tape. A simple splicing block is available which makes the process even easier. Tapes must be of the same configuration and tape speed. Although splicing is most practical for reel-to-reel tapes, cassette tapes can be spliced if the cassettes used are the type that can be opened by removing screws.

2. Editing by using two recorders. A second method of editing is accomplished through the use of two recorders. Various segments can be placed in a given order on one tape by simply duplicating these tape segments one at a time in proper order. This method serves well for the simple editing of most presentations. It is not a practical method for editing out single words or phrases. The only special equipment needed is a patch cord which enables recording directly from one recorder to another.

DUPLICATION OF TAPES

When only a few copies of a tape are needed, it is practical to duplicate one at a time from one recorder to another and repeat the process as many times as necessary. However, if a quantity of tapes is needed, some method to duplicate several tapes at once is more practical. Two basic methods are available:

1. High speed duplication at a lab. Tape duplicating labs can duplicate reel-to-reel tapes or cassettes on professional equipment at very high speed for reasonable prices. One lab's prices for duplicating quantities of one hundred to five hundred are: sixty-minute cassette, \$1.29 each (including cassette); sixty minute tape, (reel-to-reel) \$1.50 each (including tape). There is no rigid rule as to when it becomes economical to follow this method, but the quantity of tapes and length of tape must be considered.

2. Standard speed duplication of several tapes at a time. Equipment is available that enables duplication of six or eight tapes at a time at regular tape speed. Cassette duplicators of this type are available for about six hundred dollars. Such a duplicator is very easy to operate, requires little supervision, and might be a very good investment for some churches.

EQUIPMENT SELECTION

Because the task of selecting tape recorders is very complicated, with hundreds of brands and thousands of models available, we will limit our discussion to some basic things to look for when buying.

1. Automatic level control for record. This automatically sets the record volume so that the loud and soft sounds are recorded adequately.

2. Built-in A.C. adapter for battery operated recorders. This feature allows the recorder to be plugged directly into 110 volt current which is the standard electricity of the American home.

3. Recorders do not have to be heavy to be of good quality.

4. Available service. Many of the foreign brands have an excellent repair network across this country.

5. Reasonable cost. The most expensive tape recorders are not always the highest quality. Persons also sometimes purchase a recorder with features and fidelity not needed for their use.

CONCLUSION

In the days ahead, as the church takes seriously the necessity for innovations in communication, various media will be selected and each medium will have a message of its own in addition to the content programmed. There will be designs in which the audio tape cassette can serve well; for, as a medium, it has a unique and important message. Feedback is essential to communication, and the very fact that the cassette lends

itself so well to feedback can foster interest in having it. The tape cassette is a truly portable, new, fresh, and inexpensive medium, well suited to life in today's world. Finally, sound is an action medium, and this inherent movement can help set the stage for change. In addition to these messages of the medium, the audio tape is capable of bearing creative, informative, motivating programs, conducive to feedback and effective communication. The audio tape can be the churchman's medium for innovation in ministry.

2. Making and Using Slides

Wilford V. Bane, Jr.

It would be hard to say exactly what or who caused the revolution. Perhaps it was TV, Xerox, Sister Corita, Kodak, Marshall McLuhan, the generation gap, or perhaps all of these. But whatever the cause, we find ourselves in a visual culture. The visual has taken center stage in our attempts to communicate, teach, and learn. As evidence of this, witness the highly visual nature of many TV commercials, the emergence of the "happening," light shows, film experimentations, colorful and diverse designs in everything from magazine ads to clothes.

For those who want to express themselves visually, the projected slide is one of the more accessible and effective visual tools. Simple and inexpensive cameras, as well as a variety of processes to make projected images, have combined with the visual revolution to make the slide an attractive op-

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tion for those wanting to communicate visually. In this chapter we shall look at the production and use of slides.

THE CHANGING USE OF SLIDES

The mere mention of slides elicits memories of a vacation trip or a family outing. Most of us take slides for our own satisfaction, or to relive special occasions with friends. Beyond that, we rarely find reasons to use them. Occasionally we use slides as a framework for a talk or lecture.

In this chapter, however, we are talking of providing communication and learning experiences that require visualization as an integral and necessary part of the message.

McLuhan and others have brought to our attention the effects that TV, movies, slides, and other visual media have had upon young persons. They learn visually. Because we have a whole generation of persons who have grown up with some of the most highly skilled communication available, visuals are, therefore, increasingly more important in the communication process. Young persons have learned that good visual communication is fast, efficient, effective, and interesting. They prefer the visual experience.

We have known for a long time that visuals enhance the communication process, but only now are visuals beginning to be studied for themselves. As yet, visual literacy is not neatly defined, but it includes elements from perception theory, graphic arts, screen education, semantics, and other visually-oriented fields. John L. Debes, of Eastman Kodak, feels that there are visual elements and symbols which accurately convey meaning. While there is no visual alphabet, many high schools are teaching film making and film appreciation. These courses are having the effect of producing a generation highly conscious of our visual world. The production and use of the slide is an easy way to become involved in this visual communication phenomenon.

TYPES OF SLIDE PRESENTATIONS

Let's consider different types of slide presentations by examining possible ways to plan a presentation about "The Church in Today's Changing World." After deciding to make this, for the most part, a visual presentation, the first step is to state the purpose of the presentation. What will be the result of someone having seen the presentation? The desired results should determine the procedure and the type of presentation.

If the primary purpose is to provide information, the first step might be to write a verbal script which includes all the necessary information. For best results, each slide should be visualized and described while the verbal part of the presentation is written. It may be helpful to use index cards in the planning and writing process. Each card can contain the script and visual description for one slide. Cards can be interchanged and shifted to get the best sequence. Usually there would be a high correlation between the verbal script and the visuals. However, ideally, the visual should carry inherent content. Very likely one slide projector and a screen would be used. This type of a slide presentation would be very much like a filmstrip.

Creating an emotional response might be another purpose. For example, how can I create in the viewers an awareness of their feelings about the changing church? To fulfill this objective, think primarily of pictures which elicit feeling. The task would be to plan visual sequences of people, places, and social issues in our society. Shots of the church building and people could be strategically and carefully inserted to indicate the role and involvement of the church in these issues. Because of the visual and emotional involvement of the audience, they can better discuss the implied issues with a high degree of participation. The script for such a presentation should identify situations, express feelings about what is pictured, capture the sounds of what is on the screen, or use appro-

priate mood music. Of more concern is the creation of an experience rather than a logical progression of ideas.

Another purpose might be to suggest that the church be more involved in community issues. Here is a possible place to use two slide projectors and two screens to simultaneously show situations in the community and the church's response to them. Simultaneous images can show situation and response, what is and what could be, before and after, one thing from two perspectives, two similar things (for emphasis), or two different things (for contrast). Although both screens would usually show pictures, sometimes a sequence might use one screen to indicate separateness, isolation, or emphasis. The sound track could direct attention by close correlation to one screen, and thus highlight what is going on there.

More screens and more projectors can be added. Four or five images are very effective in creating a visual environment, or in emphasizing an object. When five images of substandard houses, for example, are projected in sequence allowing all five to remain on the screens simultaneously, an acute awareness is created. When one solitary child is pictured in the center screen, while the others remain blank, it focuses attention more effectively than would only one screen. For the multi-image presentation, the sound track can be narrative, sound-effects, music, or a combination of all. With five screens, it is difficult for any narration to dominate.

These brief descriptions have illustrated several types of slide presentations. Not all of the possibilities have been described, but most presentations will be one of two basic types: The first utilizes visuals built around words, and the second is a series of images carrying the content with minimal attention to words. The latter is the most time consuming and difficult to produce, but often creates the most involving and satisfying results for the viewer; it does what no verbal communication can do—it communicates visually.

THE MULTI-SCREEN SLIDE PRESENTATION

The multi-screen presentation is a recent innovation in the use of slides.

In producing a multi-screen slide presentation, a choice must be made early. That choice is whether to produce a presentation where slides are shown randomly on the various screens, hoping that the slides and narration come out even, or to produce a closely scripted presentation with precise timing for each slide change.

Choosing the first option requires less precision in projection, but the effects are very real. An excellent example of this followed the theme, "People." The sound track consisted of Barbra Streisand singing the song "People." Several screens randomly projected hundreds of pictures of individuals and groups of people. The total presentation was only three to four minutes and therefore the random effect was easy to manage. Each time the presentation was made, it was slightly different—a new creation.

However, some presentations, because of theme or purpose, dictate the careful coordination between visuals and sound track. The highly coordinated presentation takes more time to assemble and more practice to show. It requires a script and careful instructions. It is the kind of presentation, however, that can be packaged and moved from place to place with different projectionists and yet remain the same presentation.

MECHANICS OF A MULTI-SCREEN PRESENTATION

Good equipment as well as good planning is needed for a smooth multi-screen presentation. A projector which uses slide trays is a necessity; circular trays seem to be the easiest and most advantageous. With a circular tray, a slide or a piece of poster board of the proper thickness can be cut to size and placed in the machine before the slide tray is put in place. The

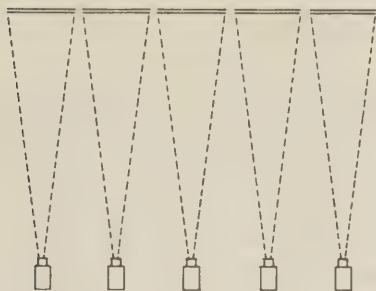
extra slide or "blank" will then be picked up and carried in the tray in the "zero" position until all eighty slides have been shown. The same slide will stay in the projector and appear on the screen as the slide tray is being changed. A piece of posterboard will block the light and the screen will be dark when changing trays. The same slide or "blank" will also be picked up and carried through to give a visual bridge for tray changing. This is especially helpful when several projectors are used and several tray changes are made during the presentation.

Remote control projectors are a must in a multi-image show. Projectors will not likely be adjacent to each other, and in this situation, a central control station must be established from which to control all equipment (including the sound source). Remote control units which come with the projector can be taped together to provide a control center, or units can be bought or built which allow remote control for several projectors. For proper coordination, all projectors must be controlled by one person. (Be careful not to overload electrical circuits. Five projectors will blow a normal 15 amp circuit.)

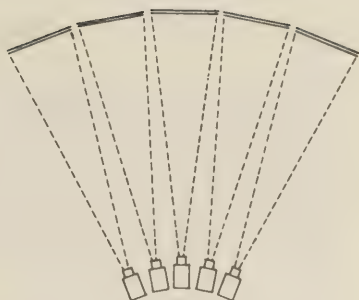
Equipment can be purchased which programs and controls the operation of several projectors. This obviously simplifies the job of projecting the show. However, it is relatively expensive and should be purchased only if you plan repeated showings. (In some places these control units can be rented.)

The placement of the equipment is important so as to eliminate distortion. All screens and images should be the same size, therefore, all projectors should be the same distance from the screen (or use different focal-length lenses). This can be accomplished in at least two ways. (See illustrations.)

The screens should have little or no gaps between them. In many cases, a white wall or display paper attached to the wall works well. Display paper comes in rolls that range in sizes up to 9-by-36-feet. (The equivalent of three 9-by-12-foot



No. 1



No. 2

screens.) It is reusable and not as expensive as renting large screens.

The script should be developed not only to plan the presentation, but to show the projectionist when to change each projector. A sample script using the words from the song "People" might look like the following for a five-screen show.

① "people"



② "people who need people"



③ "are the luckiest people in the world"



After the slides are placed in the trays and the script is complete, it may be very helpful to indicate what tray number the slide occupies. If synchronization between pictures and sound is lost, this numbering is almost essential if coordination is to be reestablished.

A multi-screen slide presentation is not simple. It can, however, be very exciting to prepare and to view.

SECURING SLIDES

There are several sources of good visuals, but perhaps the simplest way is to get a camera and take your own. Local photographs are necessary to make the presentation relevant to your audience. Simple cameras, along with extensive exposure tolerances in today's film, make technical slide photography easy, even for the amateur. However, letting the proper amount of light pass through the lens, and having the properly exposed photograph does not guarantee a good picture. Here are a few simple guidelines for better visuals.

1. *Each slide should contain only one idea.* The most common temptation is to get all we can into each picture. This is not good. Think through what the picture is about and focus on that. Generally, a picture is much more effective if it is one person, not a group, or one element in a landscape, not the panoramic view. There are exceptions, but it is easier to get too much in a picture than too little.

2. *Keep backgrounds simple.* The human eye has the ability to single out an image and to ignore the background. A camera does not do this automatically. Therefore, make sure that there are no distracting objects or shapes in the background. Sometimes background distractions can be eliminated by changing the angle of the picture from one side to the other or by shooting from a high or low angle. On subjects that are relatively close (up to fifteen feet) the background can often be put out of focus by opening the lens to its largest opening. As a general rule, the larger the opening in the lens, the more narrow is the focal range of the picture.

3. *Proper composition and framing add strength to the picture.* Each picture needs a center of interest, although not necessarily in the center of the picture. A common composition is the "L" composition where the center of interest is to one side with the other elements in the picture as balance. Use natural lines as guides for the eye in scanning the picture.

There should be an easy, smooth sweep rather than a number of "hot" or interesting spots.

4. *Put people in the picture.* This provides a center of interest in scenic shots, as well as providing perspective and depth. People help the viewers become involved.

5. *Make subjects colorful.* This seems elemental, but colorful subjects make more interesting pictures. Plan for color contrast between subject and the rest of the picture. This helps the object of interest to stand out more sharply.

Basically, good pictures can result by giving careful attention to a few basic ingredients: good exposure, good focus, pleasing composition, simplicity, colorful subjects, and a point of interest. Following this simple formula will improve pictures. (Details on good photography can be found in publications listed at the end of this chapter.)

There are other ways of securing photographs of local situations. Borrow them from friends. The chamber of commerce, local businesses or governmental agencies may have suitable slides. If there is sufficient budget for the production, hire a professional photographer to take pictures to your specifications. Local newspapers might have slides or pictures in their files that can be copied. There are also commercial sources of slides. In larger cities, there are commercially prepared photos of the city, or specific subject areas.

The copystand should not be overlooked as an important source of good visuals. With a copystand, all of the best flat pictures can be copied into slides. Slides made directly from a good quality printed page have amazing clarity and definition when projected on the screen. With the copystand, the picture can be cropped to use the part which is most appropriate.

Good copy work is made easier with a single-lens reflex camera and some extension tubes to allow the lens to focus at short distances. A single-lens reflex camera has a viewfinder which looks through the lens of the camera and allows the

photographer to see the exact image that will be exposed on the film.

For the beginner, copywork may require experimentation to discover how the equipment works, and to determine the proper exposure. Data books from Kodak provide more information about copying and make suggestions about how to set up a copystand.

A copystand provides a good way to make titles or slides of printed materials. Letters can be placed on a picture to be copied and photographed. Print on transparent acetate or glass and lay it over the photograph for more complicated lettering. Remember to keep the lettering large enough for easy reading when the slide is projected. Letters should be no less than $1/25$ the total height of the slide. If it can be read when holding the slide up to the light, it can be read by most persons even on the back row when it is projected. It is a common error to assume that because letters are legible on the copystand that they will be legible on the slide when projected.

It is possible to copy slides that have been projected onto a matt white screen. When exposed properly, the lamp from the slide projector creates a copy close to the original in color balance. This enables one to copy existing slides without expensive equipment. Multiple copies of an original slide creates the possibility of an interesting visual sequence using the original slide as a base. Much as a musical composer uses a simple theme in many ways, one picture, or parts of it, can be used creatively. Copy all or portions of the slide, copy it slightly out of focus, copy a small detail of the original. Once twenty or thirty pictures have been taken from the original, put together a visual sequence around the central theme of the original slide.

SLIDES WITHOUT A CAMERA

There are ways to make slides and not use a camera at all. Several companies have products that were created primarily to produce transparencies for the overhead projectors. These

same materials can easily be used to produce slides. An 8-by-10-inch sheet of acetate for the overhead projector can be cut to make twenty 2-by-2-inch slides.

Slides made in this manner will not have the characteristics of slides made with a camera. They will be more impressionistic and have less detail. However, they can be very colorful and contain many novel effects that will add to your slide presentation. They can be very effective in creating mood and feeling, especially when mixed with photographic slides. There are limitations to the slides that can be produced with these materials. The transparency films rely upon copying the image from a printed page to the transparent film—the size of the image remaining the same. Therefore, images which are to be used in a 2-by-2-inch slide must be small. However, twenty small 2-by-2-inch images can be glued or taped on a sheet of paper and all transferred at once. The 8-by-10-inch transparent sheet containing the transferred images can then be cut into the twenty slides and mounted into slide binders.

The exact process to transfer the image from paper to transparency varies from product to product. However, as a general rule, line drawing illustrations or black and white pictures with simple and prominent lines work best. Although some companies have color transparency film, it may be more satisfactory to color the slides by hand with transparent colors.

Dr. Richard B. Byrre of the University of Texas has described production techniques for using several of these transparency materials to create slides. The step by step instructions below are adapted from procedures described by him. These processes are not an attempt to be comprehensive. They are presented to encourage experimentation by providing instructions to get started.

USING PARLAB FILM AND COLORED DYES

The materials needed in the Parlab process include a 3M

Thermofax heat transfer copy machine, a quantity of Parlab charging sheets (no. 430), Parlab color film (no. 101 black), Parlab cleaning solution Type A, cotton balls, plastic gloves, and some ready mounts. Twenty slides are made at once by preparing an 8-by-10-inch original which is copied onto one piece of 8-by-10-inch Parlab film.

First, to aid in the preparation of the original, draw squares on a sheet of 8½-by-11-inch paper. For horizontal or vertical slides, make the squares 1½ by 1⅜ inches. This sheet will serve as a guide to paste pictures and drawings on. (If you plan to make a lot of slides this way, you may want to mimeograph these guide sheets.)

After creating the original art work sheets, place a Parlab charging sheet (no. 430) pale side down on top of the original.

Run the sheets (original on bottom face up) through the machine, at a slightly slower speed than for 3M buff paper.

Discard the charging sheet, and place a sheet of Parlab color film (no. 101 black, emulsion side down) on the original. The notch on the film should be in the upper left corner.

Again, run these two sheets through the machine, at a slightly slower speed than before. When the sheets emerge from the machine the film will need to be cleaned. The material cleaned from the film is very difficult to wash off, so plastic gloves are a good idea.

Clean the film by using Parlab Type A cleaning solution and cotton balls. During the cleaning process the image should begin to emerge. The 8-by-10-inch sheet should be dried and cut into the slide size squares and placed into slide mounts. When all are mounted they may be painted using Parlab Duplicolors (no. 451). To leave the image intact, paint on the non-emulsion side, but to blur the image and create a psychedelic effect, paint on the emulsion side. With experimentation and imagination, a wide variety of slides can be created.

USING 3M FILM

For a burned or etched effect use a type 128 3M projection transparency film. Begin in the same way by pasting original art work on the sheet of paper with squares marked off. For the 3M process, the originals must be in pencil or printed with carbon base ink. Non-carbon drawings can be photocopied and then the copy can be used as the original for the transparency. Place the film on top of the original with the notch in the upper right corner. Set the same 3M copy machine to as dark as it will go and run the sheets through. The sheets should emerge with image transferred to the film. For a more impressionistic effect, run the transparency through again to increase the burning. (The 3M film comes in a variety of colors.)

COLORLIFT

Another way to obtain slides without a camera is by using the colorlift process. Many companies make colorlift materials. However, the least expensive and best is clear shelf paper made by Marvelon. This process lifts the colors from magazine or newspaper pictures printed on clay-based paper. Again, the original (which is destroyed) must be small enough to fit into a slide binder. However, portions of pictures, or splotches of color make exciting slides. Pictures made with the process have a painted effect, with the grain of the original paper occasionally influencing the texture of the slide.

To make transparencies of this kind, cut the transparent Marvelon adhesive-vinyl-paper into squares of approximately 2-by-2 inches. Peel the backing from the vinyl against the image, burnishing it with a hard object to remove all air bubbles. The plastic cap on a ball-point pen works well. With the two materials now stuck together, place them in water to soak until the paper is easy to peel off (approximately two

minutes). The vinyl should be rubbed and washed so that all the clay comes off. (A clay residue on the vinyl will cause an old-cracked-oil-painting effect when dried.) The ink and image should now be transferred to the vinyl. Since one side of the vinyl is still sticky, another piece of like-sized clear vinyl should be stuck to the sticky side to prevent small particles of dust from adhering to it and eventually ruining the image. The slide is now ready to place in a dry mount and project.

The beauty of the non-camera slide process is the cost. Each slide costs two to three cents, and most of that cost is the mount.

These slides can, of course, be reused and after each presentation you have additional slides to add to your permanent collection.

USING THE SLIDES IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Slides can be used as an educational tool without having to prepare and show them yourself. Let your students do the work. Let the process of production provide involvement for your students. Assign an issue or situation and suggest that small groups of students be responsible to report visually on that issue. The vehicle of the slide production becomes the incentive for students to learn or to organize what they know. To communicate visually, as with any other form of communication, requires a decision about what to say. For example, ask students to prepare a visual presentation on the mission of the church in today's world. Not only will they become involved in the issue, but the process of creating a communication experience becomes an exciting task.

Suggest that students use slides as a vehicle to express their feelings about an issue. Slides of the students themselves can be used as a stimulus to tackle the question "Who Am I?" The answer to that question might be in visual form.

Production of slides can serve as a framework for development of social skills and personal confidence.

The above suggestions are only the beginning. Think of other instances where involvement in production and assembling of slides could serve as a tool for learning. It provides an excellent opportunity for such group involvement, and all you do is provide the technical guidance, the raw materials, and the issues to be studied.

CONCLUSION

Slides are one of the best ways to capitalize on the emerging visual culture. Using visuals along with sound can transmit feelings and emotion, as well as information. Slides, as well as being interesting and fun to work with, are a good way to involve an audience. More importantly, however, is the increasing evidence that anyone who is serious about communicating must sometimes use means *other* than verbal. Just as the industrial revolution changed the way we work, so the visual revolution is changing the way we must communicate and relate to one another. Why shouldn't we, as Christian communicators, be in the vanguard?

FOR ADDITIONAL READING

Discovery in Sight, The Paulist Press. A collection of 200 slides with several articles on slide use. Also suggestions of slides to use for specific topic, \$70.00.

KODAK DATA BOOKS

Producing Slides and Filmstrips, Kodak Data Book S-8, \$1.25.

Adventures in Indoor Color Slides, Kodak Data Book.

Adventures in Outdoor Color Slides, Kodak Data Book.

Audiovisual Notes from Kodak, monthly publication.

How to Make Good Pictures, 32nd Edition. A complete handbook on the fundamentals of still photography for the amateur. \$1.50.

Advanced Camera Techniques for 126 and 35mm Cameras, AC-56, 95¢.

Copying—M-1, 7th Edition, \$1.00.

PRODUCTION OF 2 X 2 INCH SLIDES FOR SCHOOL USE \$2.00.

Visual Instruction Bureau

University of Texas

P.O. Drawer W-University Station

Austin, Texas 78712

Making Slides Duplicates and Filmstrips, Norman Rothschild.
New York: Universal Photo Books, 1965.

Planning and Producing Audiovisual Materials, Jerrold E.
Kemp, San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co. 1963.

PART THREE

Written Communication

Introductory Remarks

THEODORE PETERSON

On a March day in 1731, a Londoner named Thomas Edwards was one of seven wrongdoers hanged at Tyburn, the place where English authorities made a public spectacle of their bad examples. He was not quite sixteen-years-old, and the prison chaplain who attended him noted his behavior on the scaffold: "He wept and cry'd a great plenty, as he had done before."

Thomas Edwards led a brief, unremarkable life, and he died for robbing a stranger of hat, hat band, scarf, and four shillings. His case was routinely recorded in two pamphlets for public sale, and this is perhaps the first time his name has appeared in print since then.

That is precisely the point of the story, which illustrates two of the many strengths of the printed word—its capability for conquering space, and its capability for conquering time. Because of print, a reader living several thousands of miles away and more than two centuries later can learn about an obscure weaver's apprentice who turned robber.

Print has other strengths, which we will soon come to, but those two alone should be enough to commend it to churchmen. Curiously, however, churchmen still depend on the spoken word in face-to-face situations as their chief medium

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of communication—curiously, for print could enormously increase their audiences. All of the mass media are just one aspect of human communication in general. In a sense, they are technical extensions of the spoken word and gesture, much as the H-bomb is a technical extension of the clenched fist. Even in this age of electronic communications, print has retained its power. Compared with radio and television, it has some strengths and limitations peculiarly its own.

As we have said, the printed word can conquer space. It is highly portable, and its portability has two aspects. For one thing, the printed word can travel over great distances more readily than man. For another, it can inform and entertain readers on the move. Magazines, newspapers, books, paperbacks—people can read all of them on the subway or in the jetliner. Radio and television also can send messages over great distances, of course, and portable transistor sets have enabled people to listen and to watch on the go. But radio and TV have this limitation: Their receivers must be within range of a broadcast signal. Print needs no such tie.

Print can also conquer time. The printed word has permanence. It remains there, for constant use and reuse, and the reader can turn to it whenever he chooses—after an hour, a week, a decade. By contrast, the broadcast word is evanescent. A person must be on hand at a special time if he wants to see or hear it, and the time is rarely of his own choosing. He ordinarily cannot retrieve a broadcast if he missed it, although audio and video tape recorders are making it possible to capture programs for later use.

Because of the permanency of print, a person can set his own pace as he reads a magazine or book. If he does not understand something, if he wishes to savor a particular passage, he can read it time and again. But he must follow radio and television broadcasts at the pace they set, and that pace may be too fast or too slow for him. If he misses something, if he wishes to linger over something, he is out of luck; he has no chance for a repeat.

Moreover, the printed word is compatible with thoughtful reflection. Compared with the broadcast word, it appeals more to the intellect, less to the emotions.

None of this is to suggest that the printed word is more effective than the broadcast word for all purposes. The point is simply that they are different. Each has distinct strengths and limitations. But the strengths of print are so great that it is unfortunate that churchmen still use their voices more than they do their pens.

The sections that follow are intended to reawaken or to inspire an appreciation of the written word. They are intended to encourage you and to help you in using the written word—in your sermons, in your personal and professional correspondence, in newsletters and bulletins, in newspaper stories and features, in magazine articles. They do not pretend to offer quick tricks for easy writing; all writing consists of putting one elusive word thoughtfully after another, and it is basically hard work. Nor, let us be honest, do they pretend to offer much that is highly original, for they are rooted in classical principles. But they do pretend to approach the whole business of writing in an orderly fashion—by taking up, in sequence, the problems of understanding your audience, reaching your audience, organizing your article, writing your article, and using the media.

In that sentence and in the sections that follow, we have used the word “article” out of desperation. True, the discussion in some of the following sections is oriented toward the magazine article, largely because it is hard to speak of organization, say, in the abstract and because the magazine article represents a sustained piece of writing. But most of the principles we will consider apply as validly to any fairly long piece of writing—a sermon, an essay, and an annual report—as to the magazine article, and some of them apply to all writing. No term covers all of the types of writing to which they do apply, so for convenience and by default, “article” will be the generic term to stand for all pieces of writing.

1. Understanding the Media and Their Audiences

Theodore Peterson

If you write an article for just “any audience,” you probably have written it for no audience whatsoever.

All of the mass media are highly selective. They address themselves not to everyone but to little publics within the total population. And audiences are highly selective. They choose among the various mass media. Your aim, then, should be to adapt whatever you are writing to the medium that will carry it and to the audience of that medium.

Although all of the media are selective, the printed media are the most selective of all. When a book publisher brings out a volume about the poetic imagery of Edgar Allen Poe, he does not expect every literate American to buy and read a copy. He hopes, a little wistfully, that he will find a few thousand readers among millions. A newspaper publisher in Wolf Point, Montana, does not expect to draw readers from Young America, Minnesota; he wants his audience to be concentrated in his town's trade territory. A magazine publisher decides upon some clearly-defined audience that he wishes to reach—one sharing a common trade or profession or leisure-time activity, one sharing similar religious interests, cultural interests or social concerns. Then he works out a balance of

editorial content that will attract the readers he has decided to reach and that, by implication, will turn others away.

Ordinarily he tries to saturate his chosen market, but he does not extend it to increase his circulation. For instance, the publisher of *Seventeen* magazine addresses his magazine to the nation's teen-age girls. To attract them, his magazine carries articles about fashions, beauty care, the home, entertainment, careers, food, etiquette, college, and reviews of movies, TV shows, books and records. In increasing his circulation beyond its present 1.5 million, he will concentrate his efforts within his teen-age market. He would hesitate to increase it by enlarging his audience to include older career girls and middle-aged mothers. The editorial material that would most likely interest them would probably alienate his present readers.

In the past decade or so, magazines seem to have sharpened their editorial focus and address themselves to ever narrower audiences. The titles of a few magazines that have been started in recent years illustrate just how specialized magazines have become: *Budget Travel*, *Fly Fisherman*, *Geriatrics Digest*, *Government Executive*, *Hi-Rise Living*, *Jet Cargo News*, *Lottery Guide*, *Meetings and Conventions*, *Surfing*, *Western Skier* and *Weight Watchers*. There have been magazines devoted to pilgrimages to Catholic shrines, travel with trailer and camper, translations of articles about chess, bridging the generation gap, and finding jobs for blacks.

Because magazines have refined their content and their audiences, those that a nonreader might think to be quite similar may be entirely different. Both the *New Yorker* and *New York* are weeklies with their eyes on the New York scene, but there any similarity ends. In audience, in design, in the subjects they cover, in approach to those subjects, in tone, in article length, they are completely different. Even among the specialized magazines for automobile buffs, the various publications might aim at different audiences. A magazine for sports car enthusiasts is likely to find its audience among men who are older and have higher incomes and better educations than

the men who are attracted to a magazine devoted to the hot rod and drag racing.

All of this is just another way of saying that each publication has some reason for its existence. It carries material that helps to justify its existence; it ignores material that does not. *Parents'* magazine exists to help parents rear their children "from crib to college," as it puts it; *Gourmet* exists to instruct its readers in the pleasures of good food and gracious dining. Content suited to one would be ill-suited to another, for their goals are different. The other printed media also have their unique reasons for being. A newsletter may exist to keep a congregation informed of church meetings and social functions and to inspire a feeling of mutuality. A weekly newspaper in a small town may exist to provide citizens of its community with local news and features and advertisers with a means of reaching potential customers in its trade territory.

Since publications are so different, you must adapt your material to the one you are writing for and to the interests and capabilities of its audience. This adaptation is not an isolated step in the task of producing an article; it is intimately bound up with all stages. It cannot be divorced from getting and framing an idea for an article, from gathering and selecting the material to go into an article, from organizing an article or from the actual business of writing.

At every one of those stages you should approach your task with your specific audience in mind. Nearly everyone, perhaps, might have some interest in an article about preventing accidents. But an article is not for everyone; it is for a specific audience. A homeowner might be interested in the theme that one's mental attitude can make him vulnerable to accidents in the home. A personnel manager might prefer the theme that by using simple tests to detect accident-prone job applicants, he can improve his firm's safety record. In developing whichever of those themes the writer decided on, his audience would help to govern his choice of material, examples and illustrative anecdotes, his tone and his choice of words.

Tailoring articles in that fashion requires that you have a good knowledge of your medium and its readers. If the medium is one that you are publishing—a bulletin or newsletter—you should have clearly defined its objectives and carefully decided on the types of content for carrying them out. If the medium is not your own, if it is a newspaper or magazine, you should examine it thoroughly.

Several directories can acquaint you with the wide world of the printed media. *The Literary Market Place*, published annually by the R. R. Bowker Company, is the business directory of American book publishing. It contains the names and addresses of book publishers, book clubs, and literary agents. *Editor & Publisher Yearbook* lists daily newspapers and their key personnel. N. W. Ayer and Son's *Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals* each year lists more than twenty-three thousand publications and gives geographic, industrial, and economic information about the communities in which they are published. By far, the best guide to the editorial wants and needs of magazines is the *Writer's Market*, published annually by *Writer's Digest* of Cincinnati. It gives names and addresses of magazines in a wide range of categories—religious, literary, juvenile—along with brief descriptions of the types of articles that their editors are looking for.

No directory, however, can take the place of an analysis of the publication itself. Although newspapers may superficially appear to be similar, they may differ considerably in the relative amounts of space they give to local and national news, the emphasis they give to certain kinds of stories, their editorial outlook and so on. If you are tempted to write for a magazine, you should begin by subjecting a half-dozen issues to clinical examination. Start by trying to answer the basic question: What is the editorial reason for its existence? That is, what unserved interests does it serve, or what distinctive treatment does it give to already served interests? Then study the pattern of content, the editorial balance, that gives the magazine its editorial personality. What broad types of articles make up the

pattern—religious, science and health, how-to-do, biographies? What distinctive approach does the magazine bring to those subjects? How long are the articles? Who writes them? Are the authors staff writers who are listed on the masthead, contributors who have well-known names, contributors who are recognized authorities in their fields?

Honest answers to such questions can help you decide if the magazine is likely to be a congenial vehicle for what you want to write and to accommodate yourself to such mechanical requirements as word length. But you also should know just who the readers are. Are they men, women or some of both? How old are they? What is their educational level? Their income? Where do they live? If the magazine is a specialized one, what is the degree of their proficiency or sophistication in the speciality? The editorial content can give you some answers, but so can the advertisements. The products advertised, the price range of the products, the appeals used to sell them—all of those things can help you to discover a great deal about the readers.

Trying to understand your audience should not be an empty exercise. What you learn should help you to carry out the writer's tasks that we will talk about in the sections that follow. Before we take up those tasks, let us underscore the importance of understanding one's audience by looking at the writer's objectives from a different perspective. To outline one form of the communication process, Wilbur Schramm of Stanford University once used the acronym TAMAR, a biblical name that appears in one of Robinson Jeffers' poems. Each letter stands for a word describing one element of the communication process: "T" target; "A" attention; "M" meaning; "A" acceptance; and "R" response.

To achieve the response that one seeks, Schramm said, one must start with a thorough understanding of his target audience. From virtually every communication, you presumably wish to elicit some response, general or specific. Your Sunday sermon may be intended to instill or reaffirm faith in

a God of love and forgiveness, for instance, and a brief item in your church bulletin may be intended to inform or remind a youth group of a meeting on Thursday evening.

Whatever the response, you start with your audience. Let us hear Dr. Arthur West of the United Methodist Church on this point:

We need to think not in terms of a vague blur of humanity, but of specific persons with distinctive interests and concerns. It is a wholesome exercise for every minister or church committee to set down on paper or on the board some of the principal publics to whom they seek to minister: the faithful members, the occasional worshiper, the prospective members, the age and interest groups, colleagues in the business community, ecumenical leaders and associates, etc. The list can be much longer.

For a given communication, you must define your target public since its interest in your message is presumably different from that of other publics. It is not enough to know who the members of the target public are, as important as that is; it is also necessary to know just what they are like. Even neighbors with similar educational backgrounds and similar incomes may have quite different values and beliefs, quite different ways of looking at the world, quite different tastes and pursuits and life-styles. Your aim should be to learn all that you can about your target readers: their values, beliefs, attitudes, customs, state of knowledge, patterns of living, communications habits, and vocabularies. The more homogeneous or like-minded your audience, the more specific your communications objectives probably can be.

Knowing your target is useless unless you can reach it. To reach it, you must somehow get its attention, a point which we will discuss in considerable detail in the next section. You cannot assume that members of your target are passively

awaiting whatever you have written for them. You are competing with every other message and every other activity that is making a bid for their time and attention. Penetrating that competition, let alone breaching the inner wall of apathy that surrounds your prospective reader, is a formidable task.

If you are skillful enough or lucky enough to reach your target reader, you can try to communicate with him, and this brings us to the "M" of TAMAR. The word communication derives from the Latin *communis*, common. When we try to communicate with someone, we are trying to achieve some commonness with him. We are trying to establish some common ground of meaning and experience so that we can share information or ideas with him. Since each of us interprets incoming messages according to our own background and unique complex of attitudes, among other things, this commonness often is more goal than accomplishment. But without some commonness of meaning there can be no communication. Knowing your target readers, knowing their experiences, attitudes, and vocabularies, knowing the backgrounds they are likely to bring to what you are writing—all of that is important if you are to establish the commonness that is essential to successful communication.

Understanding, of course, does not mean acceptance, the second "A" in TAMAR. One may understand a message without accepting it. A reader may perfectly well understand what is meant by an advertisement which says, "Drink Captain's Table Coffee for the most flavorful coffee in the world"; however, he may not accept it or even respond to it. He may be a Mormon who does not drink coffee, or he may be an inveterate coffee-drinker who doubts that the brand is really the most flavorful. In persuasive communication, acceptance seems a condition of response—which is not to say that acceptance is a guarantee of response. Many churchmen believe that persuasion has no part in their mission, although they do see the place of open discussion from which participants independently arrive at their own judgments and con-

clusions. Acceptance also seems a condition of fruitful discussion of that sort; if your information and views are to get the consideration they deserve, they surely must be accepted.

The final letter in TAMAR stands for response, what you hope your reader will think or do as a result of what you have written. As we said earlier, you should have some intended response in mind whenever you write. You can best achieve it if you understand your audience, address your readers on their own terms, and gain acceptance for your message.

Even so, you should not expect too much from the printed media (or from the electronic media, either, for that matter). About the time of World War II, even most experts thought of communication as a rather uncomplicated process of stimulus and response. They had abundant evidence of the powerful and immediate effects of the mass media. Gerald Lambert, an advertising man, had plucked the obscure term "halitosis" from a British medical journal and made it a household word through his advertisements for a mouth wash. Orson Welles, dramatizing an imaginary invasion by Martians on a Sunday night radio broadcast, had terrorized a substantial fraction of the population. Hitler and Mussolini had demonstrated how mass communication could be used to keep entire nations under control. Kate Smith, in a marathon radio program, obtained pledges for thirty-nine million dollars worth of war bonds. From all of that it was easy to conclude that the mass media had direct and ready effects.

Today authorities are far less dogmatic about the direct effects of mass communication. Their judgment has been tempered by a considerable amount of research since World War II, much of it summarized in Joseph Klapper's *The Effects of Mass Communication* (Free Press, 1960). Although the authorities acknowledge the profound importance of the mass media to society, they no longer assume a quick and direct response to the messages that the media carry.

There are just too many intervening variables between the stimulus and response.

For one thing, people ignore much of the content of the mass media. They especially ignore material that they are not already interested in or informed about and material that is hostile to their existing attitudes. Conversely, they expose themselves to ideas that are congenial to their own. If they are confronted with material that they do not agree with, they interpret it, or misinterpret it, to make it conform to what they already believe. When mass communication runs counter to strong attitude patterns, it may fail completely.

For another thing, personal influence can be important in determining what people think and do. It is certainly a powerful mediating force, and in some instances it may be more powerful than the mass media itself. People tend to check their attitudes and beliefs against those of the groups to which they belong. In one way or another, members of groups agree on certain standards of values and conduct to which they conform and which they guard against outside attack. Few groups can long tolerate members who do not conform on matters of central importance. Either the nonconformist moves toward the standards of the group or is expelled. When mass communication runs against group norms, it ordinarily makes little headway in changing opinions, values, or behavior. People also tend to check their opinions with authorities. They find such authorities among their equals, although they may have different ones on different subjects. Opinion leaders seem to be scattered throughout the population, not concentrated in any single social class, and they may be influential with some acquaintances and not so with others.

All of this is merely to put the "R" of TAMAR in perspective, not to suggest that communication by the media is futile. The media can change attitudes and behavior. They encounter their sharpest limitations when they run head-on into established value and behavior patterns. Beyond that, they

are influential in many ways. They are the chief means people have of learning about things that they cannot know or experience at firsthand. They can fill in and round out the attitude patterns through which people view their environment. They may bring into focus issues toward which people have only latent attitudes. They may shape opinion when attitudes do not exist or have not hardened. They may affect opinion and behavior by stimulating discussion in the various groups to which their audiences belong. They may have their greatest success in reaffirming existing attitudes, but they also can be effective in channeling those attitudes in new directions. (Therein, no doubt, lies much of the power of advertising, which seems most influential when it redirects existing drives and motivations.)

So far, our discussion has been comparatively abstract and theoretical. With this as background, let us now move on to the practical business of sitting down to write an article.

2. The Writer's Task

Theodore Peterson

When you sit down to write for public consumption, you are confronted by at least four highly important tasks:

1. You must attract the reader's attention.
2. You must arouse the reader's interest.
3. You must sustain the reader's interest.
4. You must communicate effectively.

To put the matter crudely, you must attract the reader's attention amidst enormous competition and overwhelming distractions, arouse and hold his interest in what you have to say, and leave in his mind, as best you can, what is in yours.

Certain devices can help you accomplish one task but not the others. A tricky opening paragraph might arouse interest, but it might not hold the reader's interest or communicate effectively. Certain things might help you perform all tasks successfully. A happy choice of subject matter, for instance, might contribute to your accomplishing all four. At the risk of redundancy, let us examine each of the four tasks separately and consider some of the things that help us with it. Let us reserve the greatest share of space for the third and fourth tasks, retaining interest and communicating effectively.

ATTRACTING ATTENTION

Just to get the reader to notice what you have written is a considerable job, for you are competing with countless other claims for his time and attention. You are competing with

newspaper, his bright-covered magazine, his favorite television program. You are also competing with all of the other things that he would rather be doing than sitting down to read what you have written: going for a walk, visiting with friends, weeding the petunia bed. Getting into print, then, is no guarantee of being noticed, let alone of being read. The typical reader of a metropolitan daily, for instance, spends about forty-five minutes a day with his paper. On the average, he will give some small degree of attention to only about one in every five news stories and pictures. The average man will pay attention to only about one in every twenty advertisements, the average woman to only about twice that number.

What makes a reader notice one article but not another? Obviously there is no simple answer. Readers differ. What attracts one may repel another. Yet subject matter, what is being written about, may attract the attention of some readers. So might the byline of the author. At least since the turn of the century, magazines have recognized that certain bylines have a showcase appeal, and they have competed bitterly and financially for the Faith Baldwins, Mary Roberts Rineharts, Harold Robbinses and Winston Churchills whose very names are attention-getters. Alas, if a writer does not happen to be a Faith Baldwin, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Harold Robbins or Winston Churchill, there is little that he can do about it, except perhaps to hope that among some small following his byline carries stature.

Nor is there usually much that a writer can do about attracting attention through another element—layout and design. If he commits his manuscript to newspaper or magazine, he is usually at the mercy of the editor for the display of what he has written. Yet the position of the article, the arrangement of the illustrations and type, the amount of white space and the use of it, the number of pictures and what they show (even the captions under them), all may help to attract

the attention of the reader as he thumbs through a newspaper, magazine or leaflet.

Sometimes, fortunately, you may have a measure of control. If you are responsible for a church newsletter, annual report, bulletin or other publication, or editor of a religious periodical, you may have some control over layout and design and the opportunity to use them to attract readers.

Besides helping to attract attention, design can help to arouse interest. Instead of postponing a discussion of it until that section, however, let us here mention some of the points that research has turned up about reader preferences in layout. Unfortunately, the amount of research that magazines have done in this area is limited. From roughly World War II until the mid-1950s, the Curtis Publishing Company engaged in a rather considerable amount. *Wallaces Farmer* and the *Wisconsin Agriculturist* have been using research as an editorial guide for more than a quarter century. What these companies have discovered applies only to their own magazines and may not apply to others. Yet it very well might, for there have been some astonishing similarities of preferences of readers of such dissimilar magazines as the *Saturday Evening Post* of the late 1940s and the *Wisconsin Agriculturist* of the early 1960s.

Specifically, their research has turned up these points:

1. Readership seems related to the proportion of text and illustrations on the opening page of a magazine layout. The best practice, according to research at Curtis, seems to be to give a good deal of space to illustration and only a little to text on the opening page of a layout.

2. By a margin of two-to-one, Curtis readers seemed to prefer layouts that are right-side up to those that are upside down. Right-side up means layouts in which the title, the subtitle, and illustration appear over the main body of the text.

3. Editors sometimes like to put material into a box for

emphasis. Yet, according to early surveys done by *Wisconsin Agriculturist*, boxes are about the best fence you can build to keep out readers. That point still seems to hold, if the boxes are buried. But in general, boxes do not seem to have much effect one way or another. Readership does not seem to be affected by whether information is put into a box or not. Nor do boxes seem to have much effect on the readership of the adjoining story.

One ingredient of layout is artwork. Again, research suggests that simplicity is a virtue.

1. Readers like illustrations to be squared up. They do not like pictures in cookie-cutter shapes, pictures that are tilted or cropped on a bias, pictures with chunks bitten out of them to accommodate a caption, pictures that have a part of the title splashed across them. Ralph Yohe, editor of *Wisconsin Agriculturist*, summed it all up: "We think the pictures should be uncluttered and unmutilated."

2. Readers prefer large illustrations to small ones. A single large picture usually draws more attention than several small ones.

3. Readers like full, informative cutlines placed near the pictures they refer to. They prefer individual cutlines for each picture to a single copy block describing more than one picture.

4. Readers evidently prefer photographs to sketches as illustrations for articles. Both Curtis and *Wisconsin Agriculturist* found that photographs generally draw more attention to regular articles than drawings or cartoons. Cartoons do rate high in reader appeal as separate features, and the farm magazine found that they are effective in attracting attention to the editorial page.

5. In the experience of *Wisconsin Agriculturist*, having people in photographs of machinery and appliances does not do much to increase readership. The general rule seems to be this: Put people in if the picture is of the operational type; do

not put them in if the picture is descriptive, as of a new piece of machinery. Pictures with people in them do seem to draw in marginal readers. So if you are in doubt, include a person whom the reader can identify with.

Another element of design is color. But in attracting readers, is color worth the cost? If one believes the available research, the most he can answer is, "Maybe."

On the one hand, four-color photographs seem to help readership. On the other hand, black-and-white seems next best. Work at Curtis and at the farm magazines seems to suggest that a second color does nothing to attract readers. In test situations, color has scored 90 percent, no color 91 percent. Mr. Yohe has found no combination of colors that results in extra readers. That goes for titles in color, for duotones, for reverse blocks, and yellow screens on market forecasts to make them look like telegrams. Color does not even attract more attention to titles. And as Curtis found, surprinting—text printed over a tint block—is positively disliked by the readers.

Another attention-getting device that the writer clearly can do something about is the title of his article. If one wants evidence that titles are important both in attracting attention and in arousing interest, he need only reflect on the experiences of the late E. Haldeman-Julius of Girard, Kansas, who for years published scores of the famous "Little Blue Books" that sold for five or ten cents. His sales were by mail, and he advertised his books in newspapers. Since his profit from any one book was small, he tried to advertise as many titles as he could in a single advertisement. He had little space to describe each book; the title had to make the reader want to buy it. If the original title did not attract enough buyers, he would rewrite it. When a work called *Ten O'Clock* sold only 2,000 copies in a year, he renamed it *What Art Should Mean to You*, and it sold 9,000. When *The Romance of Words* sold only 10,000 he re-titled it *How to Improve Your Vocabulary*, and it sold 77,000. Here are some other original titles

and their yearly sales compared with new titles and their sales: *Pen, Pencil and Poison* (5,000), *The Story of a Notorious Criminal* (15,800); *Patent Medicine and Public Health* (3,000), *The Truth About Patent Medicine* (10,000); *Life of Tolstoy* (2,500), *Life of Tolstoy, Russian Novelist* (6,500); *Essay on Shelley* (2,000), *Shelley: Idealistic Dreamer* (8,000); *Art of Controversy* (0), *How to Argue Logically* (30,000); *Apothegems* (2,000), *Terse Truths About the Riddle of Life* (9,000); and *Poems of Evolution* (2,000), *When You Were a Tadpole and I Was a Fish* (7,000).

In the days when the *Saturday Evening Post* was perhaps the most researched magazine in the world, its staff gave titles no less systematic attention than Mr. Haldeman-Julius. They did so, as they said, because they wanted "to give every article and story the best possible break" when it came to attracting readers. In those days it was not uncommon for the editors to rework 80 or 90 percent of the titles in a given issue.

Editorial experience and research provide some general guides for writing titles. To call them anything more than guides, though, would be to give them a status they do not deserve. Like most guides, they can be broken on occasion to gain some special advantage.

1. *A title should be brief.* One editorial tradition holds that magazine titles should rarely exceed five or six words. Although magazines do not hold themselves rigidly to that limit, they usually do not stray far beyond it. Yet one of the most haunting and evocative of titles—in *Esquire* in 1966—achieved its effect by ignoring any word limit: "'Joe,' said Marilyn Monroe, just back from Korea, 'you never heard such cheering.' 'Yes I have,' Joe DiMaggio answered."

2. *A title should reflect the tone of the article.* The guide word is, appropriateness. If an article is written in a light, breezy style, the title ordinarily should be light and breezy. If the article is a serious treatment of a serious subject, the title should be serious. Tom Wolfe, an author whose prose style

is exuberant and free-form, can appropriately give his articles titles such as "The Rusky-Dusky Neon Dust" and "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test." On the other hand, *The Christian Century* in late 1971 appropriately entitled an article "Cosmological Christology."

3. *A title should have some relation to the article.* Put simply, this means that the title should give the reader some idea of what the article is about. True, magazines sometimes use titles intended to pique the reader's curiosity. True, those titles of Tom Wolfe's do little to inform the reader. Yet, editorial research at Curtis Publishing Company indicates that it is not a good idea to be "devious or cryptic or otherwise to play tricks on the readers." Research also suggests that puns in titles seem to deter reading. Readers evidently want some idea of what they are about to invest their time reading. Once editors objected to using subtitles that amplified the major title. They felt that subtitles would take away any element of surprise, especially from fiction, and that people would be discouraged from reading the pieces. Research suggested that they were wrong: It seems better to use subtitles than not to use them. If readers do in fact want to know about an article before they read it, then you should not use a title so general that it would just as well appear over some other article. The title "What's New in Our Churches," for instance, is so broad that it could relate equally well—or equally poorly—to church architecture, developments in theology, or those two visitors in the back pew.

4. *A title should have active verbs and concrete, specific nouns and adjectives.* One school of thought holds that newspaper headlines and magazine titles should not be mere labels, they should have subjects and verbs. Thus the *Wall Street Journal* runs headlines such as these complete sentences: "Inventor Lear Labors to Perfect Steam Auto as Answer to Pollution" and "Big Companies Battle to Recruit Negroes for Executive Posts." Thus two magazines as diverse as *Architectural Record* and *Reader's Digest* sometimes run

sentence titles such as "You Can't Make a Power Plant Look Like a Tree," and "We're Taking Over This Plane! And Let's Not Have Any Heroes." However, the practice seems more widespread among newspapers than among magazines, a good many of which use a preponderance of label titles. Yet even a label can be effective if it is imaginative and concrete. One gets color and action in writing by using the specific rather than the general, and that principle holds as validly for titles as for passages of prose. "The Church That Refuses to Die" is a stronger title than "Problems of an Integrated Church," and "What Can Be Done About School Dropouts" is a better one than "Solving an Educational Problem."

5. *A title should not be trite.* A title should not sag because it is tired from overwork. It should be fresh, lively, provocative. For a long time, although there are hopeful signs that the practice is waning, magazines and books have unimaginatively used *story* titles: "The Bishop Fulton Sheen Story," "The Babe Ruth Story," "The American Academy for the Advancement of Science Story." Some have settled in the *so you* rut: "So You're Going to Tithe," "So You're Planning a New Church," "So You Are Going to Have a Baby," "So You Are Building a Guided Missile." Some have resorted to hackneyed puns; over the past couple decades, perhaps four-score articles about Christmas shopping have used some variation of "Buy Buy Blues."

AROUSING INTEREST

Once you have attracted the attention of the reader, your next task is to arouse his interest in what you have written. As already suggested, the business of attracting attention and arousing interest are often so interrelated that it is difficult to distinguish between them. A headline or title, for instance, may simultaneously attract attention and arouse interest. So may layout and design. So too may subject matter.

The surest way to arouse the interest of the reader—and to hold it, for that matter—is to write on a subject that he is in-

terested in. That statement is tautological, of course, and deliberately so: the way to interest the reader is to interest him. Yet what interests people is enough of a mystery to warrant being expressed in that way.

Even the most experienced, most astute editors can miscalculate their readers' tastes. When Herbert Mayes was editing *McCall's*, he paid \$300,000 for Anthony Eden's account of the Suez crisis on the conviction that it would enhance the prestige of his magazine. It did. "Winston Churchill wrote us a nice letter about it," Mayes recalled. "Harry S. Truman sent us a telegram saying, 'Good for you.'" But readers were unimpressed. The issue sold 32,000 fewer copies than usual on the newsstand. When E. A. Grunwald was with *Business Week*, he made a similar miscalculation. He and his associates had noted that manufacturers of everything from cotter pins to machine tools insisted on having pretty girls associated with their products and thought that *Business Week* could improve its readership among its businessman audience if it carried a few pictures of bathing beauties. The editors found an excuse when they ran a feature about the Jantzen swim suit company. The issue was one that the editors intended to research, and Grunwald has recalled the results of their experiment:

I won't say it was a flop. The pictures were too big to be ignored. But I will say this:

The bathing beauties were outscored by the following:

Four charts on the state of the economy; a picture of a new Cadillac; a picture of an old Rolls-Royce; and two of the worst illustrations of a tunnel I have ever seen.

Moreover, the Jantzen girls were practically equaled by a chart showing the latest trends in whiskey sales and a picture of a 70-year-old Ford veteran getting a pension check.

Communications research suggests that interest and information tend to go hand-in-hand, as do apathy and ignorance. That is, people tend to read, look at and listen to material about subjects that they are already interested in and avoid material about subjects that they are not. People who are interested in a subject, even if they do not know a great deal about it, welcome information. But people who have no interest in a subject are difficult to reach. Several years ago an organization conducted a six-month campaign to inform the people of Cincinnati about the United Nations. It was a large-scale effort that used newspapers, radio, posters, and pamphlets. When it was all over, the results were discouraging. The information had reached people who were already interested in the United Nations and knew something about it; it did not reach the real target—the people who were uninterested and uninformed. Likewise, people tend to expose themselves to material that they already agree with and to avoid material that they disagree with.

Subject matter, then, is important, so important that it evidently outranks layout, title, and even the readability of your prose, in determining whether or not the reader will attend to what you have written.

All of this is not to say that your chances of enticing the reader are hopeless. It does suggest that the reader is an ego-centric individual who expects some reward—be it useful information or merely escape—for paying you heed and who will not read your prose just because you think that it is important to him. It does suggest that you should have a good knowledge of your intended audience. It suggests that you should consider your reader's needs, interests and concerns in deciding upon an approach to your subject so that your approach will have maximum relevance to them. It suggests the wisdom of proceeding from the familiar to the unfamiliar as you develop your subject, since the reader's interest is primarily more likely to be aroused by the familiar than the unfamiliar.

Traditionally, one obvious place for arousing interest has been the lead—the opening paragraph or paragraphs of an article. The leads of newspaper stories and magazine articles have quite different functions. The lead of a news story tries to tell the reader all of the particulars at once—the who, where, when, why, what, and how. The reader is less interested in the writing style than in what the paragraph tells him. On the other hand, the leads of magazine articles and some newspaper feature stories are more leisurely. They take many forms.

One form is the question. An article may begin, “Is it ever all right to murder?” or, “How would you spend your last day if you knew you were about to die?” One danger of the question lead is that the question may not be provocative enough to evoke much response. To a question such as, “Is blue your favorite color?” the reader might well say, “No,” and go about his business. Another danger is that the question might become so involved that the reader has forgotten the beginning of it by the time he reaches the end of the sentence:

If your wealthy uncle who died recently in Manhasset, L.I., bequeathed you one million dollars in cash and if, under the terms of the will, you had to spend the entire sum within forty-eight hours and were forbidden to invest any of it or to donate any portion of it to charity, how would you spend it?

Another form is the startling statement, as for instance, this one from *U.S. Catholic*: “Catholic schools in America are closing at the rate of more than one a day.” Yet another is the narrative, as illustrated by the following example from “Anatomy of the Great Pierre Jewel Heist” by Robert Daley in *New York* for April 30, 1973:

At about 3:45 a.m. on January 2, 1972, there was a rapping on the locked door on the 61st Street side

of the Hotel Pierre, one of the most elegant hotels in the world. An unarmed security guard named Thomas Grady peered out through the glass. He saw two well-dressed men who called that they had reservations. Behind them, carrying suitcases, stood an individual who looked to be their chauffeur—in any case he wore a chauffeur's cap—and parked outside at the curb was a limousine.

But as the men came inside under the lights, the guard saw that one wore a rubber nose. He also saw a hand with a gun in it.

Even in a magazine article, the lead can summarize what the piece is all about, as does this one from "Big-Time Gambling's Menace to Pro Sports" by George Denison, which appeared in *Reader's Digest* in August, 1973:

Fifty-six million Americans pay more than \$200 million to see professional sports events each year, and 120 million fans watch them on television. Children and their parents admire star players and their coaches. But working in the shadow of the world of professional sports is a sinister parasite group—the men who profit from illegal gambling on these sports. Across the nation, bookies, professional bettors, tipsters, handicappers, and Mafia gangsters have built up an \$18-billion-a-year business out of unlawful betting.

The lead can describe a place or a person or even a mood. Here is a descriptive lead from "Under the Enormous, Pitiless Sky" by Kenneth S. Davis, which appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*:

At approximately the 98th meridian, two-thirds of the way across Kansas from east to west, the High Plains begin—a vast tableland sloping imperceptibly across some 360 miles, upward to the

Rockies. Here and there the plains are broken by shallow valleys made of streams of intermittent flow; occasionally the plains gently roll, like a mild sea. But for the most part they lie in seeming utter flatness from horizon to horizon, dotted with far-spaced green islands, where homesteads are, and little towns.

The forms that the lead can take are almost endless: the direct quotation, the news peg, and so on.

Editors and authors may prefer one type of lead to all others because of aesthetic reasons or because of its presumed capacity for attracting readers. One editor once remarked that if he could pass a single law governing writing it would require all articles to begin with "when," since it is a suspenseful word that promises the reader a story. However, readers evidently have no such preferences, if one trusts the limited research on the subject. One researcher who compared incident leads with narrative leads in their ability to arouse reader interest discovered that they drew about the same number of readers. What attracted readers was not the kind of lead but the content of the article. Since content seems so important on all other counts, one is inclined to trust his findings.

Whatever type of lead you use, it should perform certain functions besides that of arousing interest. For one thing, it should introduce the subject of your article. It should be relevant to the theme that you intend to develop. Even if you begin with a story-telling lead, the incident should illustrate some point that your article makes. For another thing, the lead should give the reader some idea of the direction that your article is to take. If you will turn back to the lead in Robert Daley's "Anatomy of the Great Pierre Jewel Heist," you will notice that it subtly lets the reader know that this is to be an article about a robbery in a fashionable New York hotel.

Yet another thing, the lead should establish the mood and set the tone and tempo for the article. If the article is to be fast-paced, the lead should be fast-paced, written perhaps in staccato sentences. If the article is to be slow-paced—and a slow-paced article need not be dull—the lead should be slow-paced. Notice how the descriptive lead by Kenneth S. Davis, quoted earlier, establishes a mood.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

Although many teachers of writing speak glibly of the richness of language, language is in fact a blunt tool. When one considers the limitations of language and the misunderstandings that can occur when we speak or write to one another, the marvel is that we can communicate at all.

In the days just before World War II, Miss Elizabeth Atkins, a writing teacher at the University of Minnesota who could sniff a cliché two pages away, used to demonstrate to her students the limitations of words. On spring mornings she would bounce into the classroom, a bonnetful of strawberries on her arm. Giving each student a strawberry, she would ask him to write a paragraph describing its taste. On gray fall days, she would have her students look out the window, choose a tree, then write a paragraph that described it and that distinguished it from all other trees. On other days, she would have her students write a few sentences that described the sensation of just sitting in a chair. She had a profound respect for words, and she knew their limitations. She knew their potentials, too, of course, and she was forcing her students to strain for them more than to yield to their limitations.

Most people are readers first, writers second if at all, and they do not share Miss Atkins' discriminating appreciation of words. A few years ago a midwestern bank in its newspaper advertisements carried a slogan that had appealed to its officers as expressing their attitude toward their customers and potential customers: "From each according to his ability, to

each according to his needs." The bank quickly dropped the line after one amused reader reminded the president that the phrase was a slogan and major premise of Marxism.

Even if the writer does discover precisely the words that express his ideas, there remains enormous room that he will still be misunderstood. Vardis Fisher, a writer and teacher of writing, made that point beautifully in his *God or Caesar*:

Remember that the meanings of the words you write will be defined not by you but by who reads them, and that the power of abstracting *your* meaning, taken for granted by our schools, exists at a low level in most people. Words are your difficult and elusive tool. It is easy to use the tool carelessly and loosely; it is hard to use it with much exactness, even if you know with exactness what you want to say. Words can easily become your master. You can never master them.

What Fisher was warning the writer against is complacency. Even when the writer thinks that he has made himself perfectly clear, he may have failed to communicate, since ultimately it is always the reader, not the writer, who determines meaning.

If we remember what happens in even the simplest kind of communication, we can appreciate how easily misunderstandings may arise between speaker and listener, writer and reader. When we communicate, we always communicate abstractions, and we communicate abstractions that represent our personal conceptions of and thoughts about reality. Our conceptions of reality—the way we see things—are shaped by environmental, cultural, psychological and other forces, by even our physiological state at the moment. To communicate our thoughts about reality, we depend upon words, which take their meanings from the sum total of our experiences and which must often represent highly complex realities. When we communicate, we ordinarily assume that the

words we use will have approximately the same meanings for the other fellow as for us. As we noted earlier Wilbur Schramm has reminded us, the word communication derives from the Latin *communis* or "common." When we communicate, we are trying to establish a "commonness" with someone else. If commonness of vocabulary and experience do not exist, our efforts to communicate will be empty. The word *Negro* quite likely has a much different meaning for a black militant than for a Northern liberal, for instance, and the word *cow* quite likely does not convey the same thing to a peasant of India and an Iowa farmer. In his *Partners in Preaching*, Reuel Howe has remarked that many biblical and theological terms are foreign and uncongenial to contemporary man: "He neither receives nor conveys meanings by their use. Words and concepts such as 'creation,' 'fall,' 'heaven,' 'hell,' 'kingdom,' 'resurrection,' 'ascension,' and 'redemption' are meaningless to thousands of people, including lifelong church members."

Words uttered exclusively from the perspective of speaker or writer may convey quite the opposite of what he intends. The president of a Chicago firm once took a full page ad in the magazine published for his employees to remind them that their paid vacations were among their job benefits. He told them that he was reminded of vacations while taking his own, that he was "enjoying this bright, warm Florida sunshine," that each of them too could get away on a vacation at a place of his own choosing, and that the paid vacation is one of the most recent benefits of American free enterprise. "When you have your vacation," he concluded, "I hope that you will enjoy it as much as I am enjoying mine." When he wrote, his employees were enduring the cold of another Chicago winter. Few could get to Florida even if they could manage to schedule a winter vacation. It is interesting to speculate how many employees reading that memo headed, "Miami Beach, Florida, February 20," interpreted the message as, "So the boss gets to loaf in Florida while we do the

work" instead of as, "I should be grateful for the vacation I'll get next summer."

All of the communication difficulties that we have mentioned so far can occur when one person speaks to another. When one commits his message to one of the media—to a church bulletin, a magazine, a newspaper—the chances of garbling become increased. For one thing, mass communication is one-way communication. The reader has no opportunity to talk back, to request clarification, to ask for additional information. The writer has no opportunity to size up his audience at first hand, to assess the impact of his message, to judge whether or not he needs to explain it further. Once his article has appeared in print, he has pretty much lost control over it. For another thing, the reader ordinarily approaches the mass media with low motivation. That generalization is open to innumerable exceptions, of course, but it is valid enough to be of some concern, especially when one remembers that motivation and learning tend to go hand in hand. The reader knows that he is not going to be tested on what he reads, so his level of concentration is likely to be considerably less than the earnest author would like it to be. Indeed, the reader may pick up a leaflet or magazine or newspaper simply to pass the time, not for any serious wish to be informed.

Yet another thing, the reader does a lot of selecting in his use of the mass media. How much use he makes of the media depends partly on his pattern of living, since there are certain things such as working, eating, and sleeping that he has to do, often at a regularly appointed time. The reader decides how much of your article he will read; if, in fact, he decides to read it at all. He chooses the time that he will read it and the circumstances under which he will read it, and neither may be conducive to the attention that the writer would hope for. According to a study conducted in 1965 by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center, adults in the United States do about 30 percent of their reading while they are en-

gaged in some other activity. As we have already mentioned, the reader even decides upon the interpretation that he will give to the writer's message. For still another thing, the mass media generally address themselves to some common denominator of their audience. Since a publication cannot be tailored to the precise interests and capabilities of each reader, it is usually addressed to some mythical center point. To accommodate himself to that center point, the writer may have to make certain compromises with his content. He may have to simplify his arguments, for instance, or choose only the most dramatic of his facts. All in all, in writing for the mass media, the writer surrenders some measure of control over his message.

3. Organizing the Article

Theodore Peterson

Everything that we have said so far should have significance for the writer as he sits down at his typewriter to share his thoughts with others. If nothing else, it should persuade him, if he did not already know, that writing is hard work and not something to be undertaken casually. But there is a more practical lesson than that. When you write, you must retain the interest of your reader once you have aroused it and communicate effectively with him.

Just how the article is organized seems important to carrying out those two tasks successfully. The reader can reasonably be expected to lose interest in your article if you tell it from the wrong point of view, if you do not satisfy to the maximum any interest he has in your subject. The reader also can be expected to lose interest in your article if he finds it hard to follow, if he has no idea of where you are taking him. Likewise, the reader can reasonably be expected to miss the point of your article if it lacks emphasis. Busy and distracted, he must count on you to let him know what is important and what is not.

Finding the correct point of view of a straight news story is scarcely a problem. The typical news story is a straightforward, unadorned recital of facts, written by the reporter as impartial observer, and it usually has no point of view. Its inverted-pyramid organization is highly emphatic. The lead answers the questions that the reader is most likely to ask, and

the rest of the story presents additional facts in the order of their decreasing importance. But the magazine article and the newspaper feature are quite another matter. They need have no stylized organization; the best ones, in fact, have no stereotyped structure.

In organizing his article, the contemporary writer can benefit from the classical principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis, which have done service for centuries. Unity means simply that the article be about one subject, that it all be of one piece, that it have a feeling of oneness about it. Coherence means that the article should hang together, that its parts should follow one another naturally and logically. Emphasis means that the important points should stand out, the less important ones be subordinate. These principles are intimately interrelated. Before applying them, the writer should decide upon his approach to the subject. Let us examine those points in some detail.

APPROACH. How you approach your subject is likely to have a lot to do with whether or not your intended audience reads your article and understands it. Even before you finish gathering your material, let alone begin writing, it is important that you determine the reader's familiarity with and potential interest in your subject and that you decide upon an approach that will capitalize upon both. The best approach for one audience is not necessarily the best approach for another one.

Suppose, for sake of illustration, your subject is the broad one of retirement. From the viewpoint of the man about to retire, retirement may be a distressing experience to contemplate because he fears that his pension will be inadequate and that inactivity will be a burden. From the viewpoint of his wife, it may seem equally distressing because then she will always have him around underfoot. From the viewpoint of the employer, retirement may be good because it gives him the opportunity to replace certain inefficient workers with young, energetic ones, or bad because it deprives him of experienced

help which he badly needs. From the economist's viewpoint, retirement may raise questions about the balance of the labor force; from the social worker's viewpoint, it raises questions of medical care, suitable housing, and so forth. Retirement, then, is a subject that one could approach from many perspectives. The appropriate perspective might well depend upon whether the intended reader is a man about to retire, his wife, his employer, an economist, or a social worker.

In deciding upon an approach, you might find a couple of considerations helpful. One is deciding upon your own point of view. Perhaps as a churchman, you have been troubled by the number of retired persons you have known who have sunk into lives of boredom and apathy. At the same time you have been aware of dozens of worthwhile projects and good causes that have desperately needed volunteers. Your own feelings might suggest your approach: "Retirement is a time for self-revitalization through service to others." Another consideration that might help you choose your approach is your purpose in writing the article. Before you put pen to paper, you should have answered two crucial questions: "Just what am I trying to say in this article?" and "Just why do I want to say it?" Your answers might be something like this:

"I want to say that films help us to look at life in entirely new ways and to gain insight through participation in the visual experience and that the church, long suspicious and slow to accept the cinema's power, is now coming to regard it as an ally instead of as an enemy.

"My purpose is to make churchmen and religious laymen receptive to this new way of seeing and aware of the new insights that the movie medium has made possible."

An article with much that theme and purpose, "How to See a Movie" by Stanley J. Menking, in fact, appeared in *Together* in February 1968. Although this is not to suggest that the author formally went through the two steps we have just outlined. Yet, summarizing your theme and intentions in that fashion at the outset should help you in deciding upon your

approach. In the film article, you obviously are not going to approach the subject from the viewpoint of a film maker or motion picture exhibitor; you are going to approach it from the viewpoint of a person who is concerned about the church and its message, but who may consider movies that are devoid of direct religious content as being antireligious.

Once you have decided upon your theme and purpose, you should stick to them throughout the article. They should help you to decide what material to include, what material to omit, a sometimes difficult decision for an author with a superabundance of information. Generally, you probably are safe if you include material that develops your theme and that helps to accomplish your purpose, if you omit even interesting material that does not. In his research, the Reverend Mr. Menking conceivably might have turned up a fascinating anecdote about Julie Andrews on the set of *Mary Poppins* or a revealing statistic about movie attendance in Wyoming. But given his objectives, neither could appropriately have a place in his article. Therefore, your private statement of theme and purpose not only helps you to determine your approach; it also helps you to observe an important principle of writing—unity.

UNITY. As we have said, the principle of unity requires that your article be about a single major topic, that it exude a feeling of oneness. It keeps you from confusing your reader by dividing his attention, and it contributes to emphasis by focusing on a single major theme.

Perhaps every editor and writing teacher has encountered manuscripts that have shown an enormous disregard for this enduring principle. One teacher received a student manuscript entitled, "The Crow Menace." The student started out bravely to tell of the harm that crows do to field crops and to outline some of the measures for getting rid of them. But from a home economist he had acquired some recipes for preparing crow—crow casserole, fricasseed crow—and they so intrigued him that he built a substantial part of his article around

them. As a result, his article had no central theme, no clear purpose, no sense of direction.

That article was so obviously disjointed that even the student realized what he had done wrong. But the violations of unity are not always so obvious. The seemingly borderline cases are the ones that cause the trouble. Suppose, for instance, you want to write about a successful fund-raising campaign and the new church edifice that resulted from it in a single article. Would you be violating the principle of unity? Probably. Conceivably the two topics could be mentioned in the same article. Yet you would probably find that if you tried to do justice to the details of the campaign, you could not do justice to the details of the church's architecture, and vice versa. You probably would sense a conflict within the article as each of the two subjects fought for ascendancy over the other.

As we will see later, certain forms of article organization and construction contribute to unity while also contributing to coherence and emphasis. Let us consider a few ways in which you can guard against chaotic content.

First, think before you write. This is a point which we have already covered at some length but which deserves another paragraph because of its supreme importance. Whether or not you prepare a detailed formal outline is a matter of personal working habits, but even if you do not you should have a clear idea of where you are going to take the reader and how you are going to get him there. As a minimum, you certainly should compose a brief summary, it need not be more than a paragraph, that establishes your theme. You will probably have considerably more material than you can possibly include in your article. The summary is a good guide for deciding what to use and what to omit. An editor of *Time* once remarked that new writers for the magazine invariably went through a period of frustration when they were required to make their articles fit an assigned space. A writer might be confronted with 10,000 words of research on a subject; his

job might be to write a 450-word article based on it. At first, *Time* writers pass through what the editor calls their "Western Union" or "telegraphic" period. To squeeze an enormous amount of information into a restricted space, they wrote as if they were composing a telegram at word rates; they left out the "the's" and the "and's" and signalled their intentions with key phrases. Eventually they discovered the real secret of condensation. Each article leaves the reader with one single impression, the editor said. Once the writer realizes that, he need only to ask himself, "What is the impression that I wish to leave with the reader?" and to select his material accordingly.

Second, you should be sure that your theme is narrow enough to be developed within the limits of your article. The separation of church and state may be a subject that you are interested in and qualified to write about, but it has so many aspects that it is scarcely a manageable topic for intelligent discussion in a single article. Therefore, you would be wise to confine your article to a well-developed discussion of just one aspect of church-state relationships—the provisions of new state constitutions for the separation of church and state, for instance.

Third, you should be sure that you have more than enough material on the subject to develop your theme adequately. The student who wrote about the crow menace, for indolence or other reasons, failed to get sufficient information about the harm crows do to field crops and about means of controlling them. Rather than to pad his article with recipes, he should have dug for additional material or abandoned the project entirely. If you do not have enough fresh ideas and fresh information to write a few thousand words on a subject, you probably are not qualified to write about it to begin with.

Fourth, you sometimes can contribute to unity by stating your theme and objectives early in your article. Since this device also can contribute to coherence and emphasis, we will just mention it here and postpone elaboration of it.

Fifth, you sometimes can best achieve unity by integrating

your material around a person instead of presenting it in a more general or abstract fashion. Magazine editors have long recognized that an effective way of treating many subjects is to center the material around a specific individual. If a magazine wishes to tell what is happening in the automotive industry, it may build its piece around the president of General Motors. If it wishes to report on the country music craze, it may do so with a sketch of Loretta Lynn, a popular country singer, as *Newsweek* did in a cover story in June, 1973. When Lincoln Barnett suggested that he write an article about tap dancing for *Life*, he was surprised that the editor was interested. In his book *Writing on Life*, he tells of his initiation into the technique:

After I had outlined my main ideas we agreed that for journalistic reasons the article should be integrated around the personality of an individual—i.e., that it should be a close-up rather than an essay. This was probably the first time I realized that a character sketch might originate out of an editor's or a writer's interest in a general subject rather than in the specific individual who plays the title role in the finished article. For every occasion when an editor announces flatly, "We ought to have a piece about Dr. Blank, the helminthologist," there will be another time when he says, "We ought to have a piece about helminthology. Whom shall we hand it to?" This explains why readers often will find themselves deeply interested by a sketch of a man whose name is completely unfamiliar to them; for every good close-up reveals its protagonist in the perspective of his calling and offers a store of wider information that transcends the pivotal facts of his life and personality.

By using a person as the focal point for his material, the writer may get a unity that would otherwise be difficult to

achieve. More than that, the technique helps to satisfy the common desire people have to read about people rather than things and enables the writer to use such dramatic devices as conversation and flashback to develop his article.

Despite the many blessings of unity, it is a principle that may be broken on rare occasions. The rules of writing are not sacrosanct, and all of them may be broken to gain some special effect. Indeed, some writers, Gertrude Stein for one, have earned their reputations by breaking them. If you sometimes choose to disregard the principle of unity, you are free to do so. But you should do so consciously. You should realize that you are violating an accepted principle of good writing, and you should have a clear idea of just what you hope to accomplish by violating it.

If you feel that you must depart from your central theme, you may wish to use some device to minimize the effect of lessened unity. You may wish to warn the reader that you are about to digress so that he will be spared confusion and will not lose sight of your major points. The simplest warning may be just a word or phrase such as "incidentally," "to digress," or a passage fenced off by parentheses. You may wish to keep your digressions out of places where they would get emphasis from their very position. As we will see, the beginning and the end of an article are places where material gets emphasis because of its position, and they seem poor places for digressions. (But even this advice has its exceptions. If you are writing a speech, you may wish to avoid introducing your major theme at the opening in order to make sure that you have the attention of your audience before taking up your major points.) You may also wish to hold your digression to a reasonable length so that the reader will not get a false impression of its importance because of the large amount of space you give to it. You might best deal with some digressions in footnotes, where they will not impede the rapid forward march of the article proper.

COHERENCE. The dictionary defines coherence as "sticking

together” and “connection or congruity arising from some common relationship.” What the principle of coherence requires, in simple words, is that your article hang together and that its individual parts have some clearly understandable relationship to one another and to the whole. Whereas unity concerns the choice of material that goes into the article, coherence concerns the arrangement of the material itself, and it has two aspects. First, it is essential in the overall structure of the article so that the material has an orderly presentation and the theme a logical development. Second, it is essential within the article so that the material has natural transitions from one subtopic to another.

Writing an article is somewhat analogous to guiding a stranger to a destination unknown to him. If you are an orderly person, you probably would first decide on the most expeditious way of reaching your destination. Before setting out, you might tell the stranger in a general way where the destination is and how you propose to reach it. Then as you walk along, to keep from bumping into one another, you might prepare him for specific corners and crossings. In writing an article, you might do much the same thing. Before beginning to write, you decide just where you plan to take the reader and how you are going to get him there. Early in the article, you might include a brief passage announcing your theme so that the reader knows your destination. Then as you write the article, you might plant little guideposts—transitional words, sentences and paragraphs—as you progress from one subtopic to another.

Let us take a clear look at those three steps: arranging your material so that you get the reader to your destination as conveniently as possible, announcing your theme so that the reader knows where you are taking him, and alerting your reader to changes from one subtopic to another.

For coherence, you can arrange your material according to any of several logical plans. Later we will analyze some typical forms of article construction; here let us look at some com-

mon ways of presenting material in orderly fashion in the article as a whole or in the paragraph.

One way is by proceeding from the general to the particular. At the outset, you summarize what you are going to say; throughout the article, you elaborate on your opening generalization. Actually, most news stories, which are seldom as closely-knit as magazine articles, use essentially this form. They briefly answer the major questions in the reader's mind in the opening paragraph or paragraphs. Then, presenting the facts in order of decreasing importance, they enlarge upon those answers in succeeding paragraphs. The paragraph using the topic sentence also depends upon this form. The opening sentence sets the theme for the paragraph; the rest of the space develops it. This lead from an article about doctors' earnings in *Medical Economics* tells the reader at once what the article is all about:

When a private physician's net income loses momentum, the fault lies in his mixture of working hours, patient-visit rate, fees, and expenses. Given the right combination of these dynamic forces, his earnings are sure to forge ahead.

The article then takes up in detail the effects on income of raising fees, seeing more patients, controlling expenses and improving collections. This arrangement of material insures that both the writer and the reader know what the writer is going to say, and it contributes to emphasis by summarizing the theme in a prominent position.

Another common arrangement of material is to proceed from the particular to the general. Aesop used this form in his fables, which tell a story and conclude by pointing up a moral from it. Every churchman should recognize that the parable also uses this basic form. Although magazine articles rarely use it, it does have occasional application. For instance, an article might present case histories of a number of persons who have overcome handicaps. It could end with

the generalization that determination to succeed is more important than the odds against one.

Yet another arrangement of material is chronological, a form that can be used in personality sketches, biographies, historical articles, travel pieces and even how-to-do-it articles. A variation of it is order of space, the covering of ground in some natural fashion. Thus if one is describing a church or other building, one might do in print what he would do if actually on foot: enter by the front door and make his way methodically through the building, room by room, floor by floor.

Those are by no means the only ways of arranging your material, of course. Each of those basic patterns, in fact, has useful variations. Your choice of structure may be governed by your own inclinations, by its suitability to your material, and even by the requirements of the publication you are writing for. Those few basic arrangements were described here primarily to emphasize a point: For coherence's sake, your article should have some planned, orderly overall structure.

As we said, it is sometimes helpful to announce your theme early in the article so that the reader knows the terrain you propose to explore. Whether you begin your article with an anecdote, question, startling statement or something else, you usually should be able to move unobtrusively into an orientation paragraph that summarizes without seeming to do so. Notice how the second paragraph in this article in *U.S. Catholic* stakes out the ground that the article is to cover:

Semantically, the Generation Gap is a phenomenon of our time. It has joined the Credibility Gap, the Missile Gap, the Knowledge Gap and countless other capital-G Gaps in our contemporary lexicon of oversimplified slogans to describe complex problems.

But the problem that the words "Generation Gap" describes is as old as the human race. It is a

breakdown in communications between parent and offspring. It is youth refusing to see eye to eye with their elders, shocking them, trying to change the world. It is the new generation rebelling against the old traditions, rejecting timeworn values and institutions, forcing change upon the times.

Let us be clear: Such a paragraph of orientation is by no means essential, and at times you will deliberately omit it. Yet it has several merits, among them its contribution to coherence by charting the article's course and its contribution to emphasis by explicitly stating the article's message in a prominent place.

After you have announced your destination and started toward it, you should alert your reader to corners, warn him of high curbs and steer him around open manholes. As you switch from one topic to another, you should take the reader lightly by the arm so that he will make the turn with you. All of this you can accomplish by using transitional words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. Single words sometimes are adequate. Transitions in time are suggested by such words as "meanwhile," "simultaneously," "previously," "formerly," and "afterwards." Contrast is suggested by such words as "however," "but," and "nevertheless." Questions can help to make a smooth transition from one subject to another, although they are an obvious device and can be easily overworked:

From all of this, we can conclude that many of today's young people regard the message of the church as irrelevant.

But what of the older generation? What does it think?

Notice how effectively Hubert Birnbaum changes the subject from color to black-and-white prints in the second paragraph of this article, which appeared in *New York* for May 29, 1973:

. . . The mass photofinisher will accept any brand and type of film for development provided it is compatible with the processer in use. Since Kodak films are the most widely used, it would be quixotic for a mass lab to run with other than Kodak color processes. Significantly, many other manufacturers of color film . . . make Kodak-compatible film.

Compatibility is somewhat less of a problem in black-and-white since most commonly used black-and-white film can be processed more or less successfully in most black-and-white developers.

Key phrases, judiciously repeated, sometimes can help to tie your article together. Consider, for example, the effects of the italicized passages in the following excerpts from the article by Kenneth S. Davis in the *New York Times Magazine* that we quoted from earlier:

As for the great wide fields on either side, they seem prostrated by the heat, as flattened out as your spirit is under an actual oppressive weight of blazing sunlight. *Only the deep blue of a cloudless sky looks cool.*

Then even this apparent coolness vanishes. As you approach the town of Larned from the east . . . you notice that the sky is no longer quite so blue: it has become bleached out, pale (it seems) with the heat. . . .

* * *

And as you move west of Larned you see at once why this is so, for immediately west of the town lies what in this country is called a “*smoking*” field.

Certainly the yellowish-gray substance which rises from that field *looks like sulphurous smoke*, when viewed from a distance. . . . But it isn’t. . . .

News accounts in daily and weekly newspapers ordinarily

do not require such careful transitions and such careful mortising of one paragraph to the next, since they are designed to be cut at almost any point from the bottom up. But in magazine articles and other polished prose, the reader should be able to move along without confusion, his route carefully but unobtrusively mapped out for him by the author.

EMPHASIS. Not all information and ideas in an article are of equal importance. The principle of emphasis requires that the writer let the reader know which ones are important and which ones are not. As a writer, then, you are faced with a practical question: How can I make the important things stand out? The ways in which you can gain emphasis in the article as a whole, as we will see, are essentially the same ways in which you can gain emphasis in the sentence or paragraph: by position, by proportion, by stylistic devices, and by flat statement.

Where you place material in your article will govern the emphasis that it gets. Ordinarily material at the beginning or at the close of an article will get emphasis as a result of its 'position. Realizing that, you should not waste your opening or your conclusion on material that is unimportant or irrelevant. If you do, you are not only passing up a good chance for emphasis; you also risk giving a false emphasis to the unimportant.

Yet many writers, amateur and professional, do not know where to begin an article. Edwin E. Slosson once remarked that nine out of every ten articles he handled in his twenty years as editor of *Science Service* would have been improved by cutting the first paragraph or page. The reason is that many writers use their opening paragraphs to warm up their typewriters before getting into their subject. As Mr. Slosson put it, these writers back up too far to get a running start. They are like the man who runs a mile to gain momentum for jumping over a hedge. By the time he reaches the hedge, he is so tired that he must sit down to rest. A few pages back, in our discussion of coherence, we quoted the first

two paragraphs from an article about the generation gap in *U.S. Catholic*. If you will turn back to them, you will discover that the first paragraph is really just a warmup exercise for the second, which outlines the theme of the article. Cut it and the article gets at once to its subject.

The amount of space that you devote to material also will govern the emphasis that it gets. If you devote three pages to one point and but a single paragraph to another, the reader is justified in concluding that the material in the three pages is more important than that in the single paragraph. Why else did you dwell on it at such great length? A black speaker once gave a talk on how he thought the black people and the white people in his community could live in amity. For most of his hour's talk, he reviewed the demands of the black militants. In his final five minutes or so, he outlined his own proposals. A good share of his audience, misled by his allocation of time, left with the false impression that the moderate speaker was a militant. In preparing his talk, he had failed to get emphasis by proportion.

Such failure comes easily. One way to guard against it is to chart your finished article. On a sheet of paper draw a row of squares of equal size, one for each page of your manuscript. Number the squares so that each one represents a page of your article. In the squares indicate with different colored lines or different designs the relative amount of space you have given to your various ideas on the corresponding pages. When you have completed your diagram, you should be able to tell at a glance the proportion of space that each of your major points got in your article. Then you can consider if you have given adequate space to your important material or if you have been overly generous to the unimportant.

Two other ways of getting emphasis are stylistic devices and flat statement, both of which properly come under the heading of "writing the article," where they will get additional discussion. For emphasis, you can alter your style. You can dip your typewriter into purple ink, so to speak. If your

sentences have been long, you can introduce a series of short ones. You can set a short sentence against a long one. You can use parallel structure—two or more sentences written according to the same pattern. And you can simply tell the reader that something is important with a bald statement: “My main point is this,” “The major conclusion is that,” “But above all remember this. . . .”

GUIDELINES FOR ARTICLE STRUCTURE

In the 1940s and early 1950s, one could easily diagram a number of ways in which articles could be put together. Today such blueprints have lost much of whatever usefulness they ever had. Here is Robert Stein, editor of *McCall's*, on the change:

When I first started writing magazine articles on almost any subject of direct concern to the reader, I finished with ten rules on how to handle the subject. Well, the ten-easy-rules days are over, because any issue that can be treated with ten easy rules isn't worth considering in the first place.

Since the 1940s, magazines have become increasingly sophisticated in the subjects they treat and in the ways in which they treat them. In the 1960s, especially, they began to attract more and more writers who sought to free the article from the constraints and restraints of the formula. Tom Wolfe wrote in a super-charged, almost formless prose that well suited his subjects, some of the gaudiest representatives of popular culture. Norman Mailer and Truman Capote applied their novelists' skills to factual reporting. Garry Wills, Gay Talese, Gloria Steinem and others were concerned with achieving interpretive reporting by bringing to it the unique vision of the writer. In a talk to the Society of Magazine Writers in October, 1968, Clay Felker, editor of *New York* magazine, explained what was happening. To him the new journalism meant getting inside the story—actually living it,

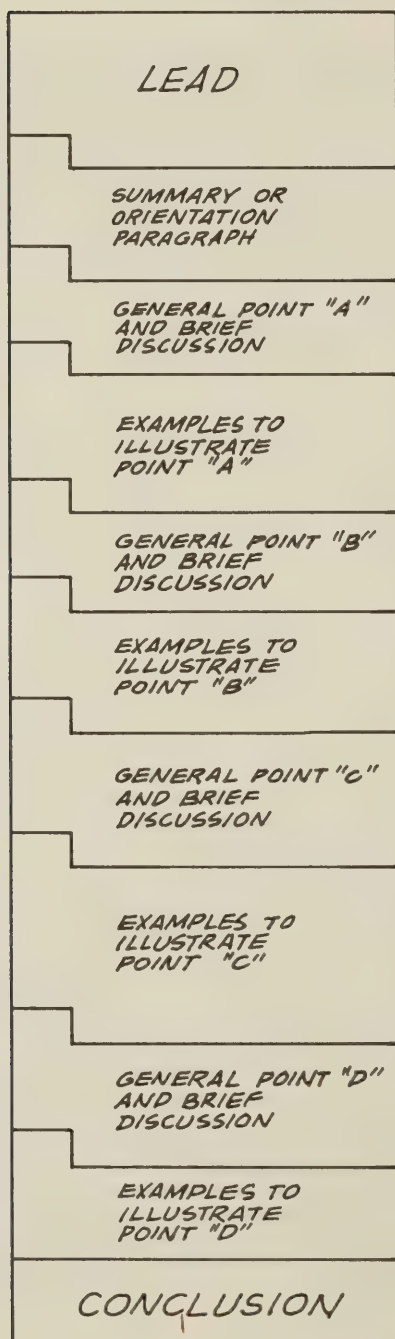
in some instances—instead of standing outside and taking notes, as the conventional journalist had done:

The new journalism makes use of the great literary techniques that are the basis of fiction: narrative, character, scene-setting, etc. Regardless of whether anybody likes it or not, this is the direction of the magazine. The novelists' techniques are now being applied to reporting, and nothing is more exciting than reading a great piece of writing about something you know is real.

Not all editors and writers have embraced the development, and not all magazines have abandoned their traditional ways of reporting. But from the *Atlantic* to *Esquire*, from *Harper's* to the *National Review*, the changes were apparent to an astute reader.

Although writers have discovered a new freedom in the magazine article, it may still be useful to diagram some of the ways in which an article can be put together. The diagrams are primarily intended to make you conscious of article structure and to encourage you to analyze the construction of articles that strike you as being especially effective. They do represent a few structures that contribute to unity, coherence, and emphasis, and that do allow you considerable room for exploration and experimentation. But they emphatically are not intended to provide you with a handy set of blueprints according to which you can build your articles.

One of the most serviceable forms appears in Figure 1. If popular magazines have had a typical article form over the years, this is it. It has many variations, but the basic pattern remains the same. Usually the lead is story-telling. It introduces the subject, suggests the direction the article will take and establishes the tone and tempo of the piece. The summary paragraph or paragraphs, without sounding like a bald summary, orient the reader by stating the theme that the article will develop. The body, the major portion of the article, is

*Figure 1.*

developed by a combination of general points, discussion and illustrative anecdotes or examples. The concluding paragraphs should give a sense of finality. The ending may be either a recapitulation of major points or a relevant anecdote, but it should so definitely bring the article to a close that the reader knows he should not read further.

To illustrate, suppose that you are going to write an article about the changes that have taken place in the religious press in recent years and about the problems that confront it today. You might begin with a story-telling lead something like this:

One day last November, an indignant parishioner in Topeka called his pastor to complain about a magazine that he thought was obscene. "If you won't help me to stop it," he shouted, "I'm going to the postmaster and see if I can't get it barred from the mails!" The magazine was a monthly publication of his church, which contributed 70 percent of its support, and the offending article dealt with homosexuality.

Having used a narrative opening to attract the reader and to make a point—that some religious magazines enrage their readers with their frankness—you might wish to use a summary to stake out the ground you propose to cover. First, for transition, you might say that readers like that Kansan, although not in the majority, are ones that church officials and editors are having to deal with. Then you might state your theme something like this:

Today the religious press is a press in conflict. In the past decade, more than a score of religious periodicals, Catholic and Protestant, have jumped from the safe shores of blandness into the stormy sea of controversy as they have sought to link the teachings of the church with social, economic and political problems. They have treated such topics

as premarital sex among teenagers, drug addiction, the draft and the individual's conscience, birth control, the God-is-dead theologians, the House Un-American Activities Committee and even the bureaucracy of the churches they represent. Their editors believe that the church cannot divorce itself from what is going on in society, for it exists as an institution to help end social injustice. But many of their readers and supporters disagree. They believe that the church should be a source of inspiration and comfort in a troubled world but that it has no business getting involved in politics or publicly airing the denomination's dirty linen. "Who," they ask, "can speak for the church?"

In the body of the article, you would want to cover various points raised by that summary. Your first general point might be an explanation of why a segment of the religious press has become increasingly controversial. You might follow your general discussion with sharp, relevant direct quotations from various editors and churchmen that illustrate and elaborate your own explanation. Your second major point might contrast the types of material that religious magazines were running twenty or twenty-five years ago with the types that they are running today. After your general discussion, you might wish to provide some specific examples. For instance, you might contrast the contents of *Ave Maria* in two issues twenty years apart—in the mid-forties, "Recent Cures at Lourdes," "Catholicism: Safeguard of Democracy," "Sign from Heaven," "Meals Without Music" and "Action Against Smut"; in the latter sixties, "The Plight of the Unwed Father," "Racial Prejudice: The Economic Swindle," "The Side-Show of the House Un-American Activities Committee," "Terrorism in Viet Nam" and "Crisis on Campus." The remainder of the body would likely cover some specific magazines and their crusades, actions by denominational bodies in support or

disapproval of their publications, justifications of this new journalism by some of its proponents and a rebuttal by some of those opposed to it, all of which lend themselves to development by the generality-example-generality method. Before ending, you would probably want to put this conflict into context by discussing it from the perspective of the church as an institution. Your conclusions should bring the article to a halt. It might be something like this:

Whatever the outcome of that debate, some editors seem determined to continue along the route they have chosen, no matter what the cost to themselves. "It's not a matter of being a troublemaker," said one. "It's a matter of understanding what religion is all about. It's a matter of conscience."

That basic article pattern can help the author to achieve unity, coherence, and emphasis. It does not guarantee unity. Yet the summary forces the author to decide upon the theme of his article and can keep him from wandering from the subject. The arrangement is a natural one for coherence. Apart from the lead, the article is developed largely from general to particular, a logical presentation. Moreover, the summary paragraph prepares the reader for what is to come. It also contributes to emphasis by getting the theme before the reader in a prominent place. The generality illustrated by example is a good way of getting emphasis, provided that the examples and anecdotes are truly relevant and do not occupy so much space that they detract from the generality.

Figure 2, a variation of the first basic pattern, is a good way of organizing material that falls into a number of broad categories. Suppose, for instance, that you wish to share with the reader several of your favorite scriptural passages that he might turn to in times of personal tragedy, of despair, of joy, of thanksgiving. Your lead could relate an incident in which one of those passages had a strong impact on you or someone else. Your next paragraph would state the general

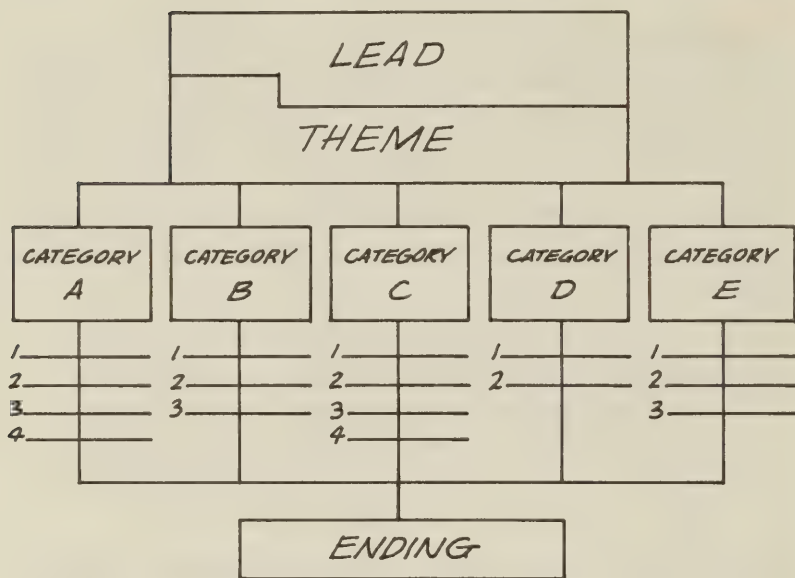


Figure 2.

point you wish to make. You might then write in a general way about the passages that fall into Category A—those of special relevance in time of despair. As points 1, 2, 3 and 4, you would quote the specific passages. Category B might cover the passages for times of joy, Category C those of thanksgiving, and so forth. This pattern can be used to present such disparate items as recipes, opinions gathered in a mass interview and reasons for divorces.

The chronological form of development is so simple that it does not require a diagram. The article simply proceeds from one point in time to a later one. The form is a natural one for biographical articles, historical articles, how-to-do-it articles, and personal experience articles. Unfortunately, however, straight chronology all too often means dullness. Therefore, the basic form usually calls for some modification.

The flashback is one device for conquering the monotony of straight chronology. You might open your article with a

dramatic incident that would come late in your story if you strictly followed the sequence of events. Once you have recounted it in your lead, you can flash back to the point of time which marks the beginning of the sequence of events and cover them in order. Another way of overcoming dullness is to break the chronology from time to time with explanations and clarifications. When Paul Conklin reported on the experiences of a nun teaching in the ghetto in *U.S. Catholic* for September, 1969, he depended heavily on a chronological approach. His article was built around a 150-mile drive that Sister Loyola made to see eight of her VISTA volunteers, and the trip gave her a chance to tell the author and his readers of her work. The article opened with motion:

The speedometer edged past 70. The flat, featureless Louisiana countryside slid by faster and faster. We came to a curve and passed a nondescript roadside tavern.

"There's a 'Whites Only' sign on that restroom door. One of these days I'll stop and take it down." Sister Loyola smiled as she spoke but anybody who has even a nodding acquaintance with her wouldn't bet on the sign remaining in place much longer.

Then Conklin introduced Sister Loyola to the reader and told of her work in a general way. Next he flashed back to the Monday of the trip ("Her day had started that morning with an eight o'clock meeting. . . .") and reported the specifics, largely in chronological order but with pauses from time to time during which Sister Loyola explained her work. Although Conklin used one of the most obvious and simplest forms of development, his readers probably never noticed. For he used the automobile trip not only to unify the article but also to get movement into the article, and he used extensive quotations from Sister Loyola not only to explain what she was doing but also to make her come alive.

4. Writing the Article

Theodore Peterson

There is no end to books about writing. Indeed, it sometimes seems as if books on how to write outnumber would-be writers thirty-one to one. To say much that is original about constructing a sentence or paragraph, then, is a doubtful undertaking.

Yet if you are to hold the reader's interest and to communicate effectively, the words you use and the way in which you use them become important. Communication experts tell us that interested persons learn more than uninterested persons (although which is cause and which is effect they do not say). If they are right, interesting the reader and communicating effectively become entwined. When we speak of writing style, we are presumably speaking of something that can help you accomplish two of your tasks as writer.

STYLE. Like the terms religion or democracy, the term *style* means different things to different people. At its simplest, it means a way of saying something. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, in his delightful Cambridge lectures collected under the title *On the Art of Writing*, defined style only slightly less succinctly: "As technically manifested in literature, it is the power to touch with ease, grace, precision any note in the gamut of human thought or emotion." Style in writing, he said, is "much the same thing as good manners in other human intercourse."

Style will be shaped by the age we live in, for fashions in prose styles come and go. Even fashionable popular novelists of the nineteenth century, for instance, often created verbal thickets so dense that modern readers would be discouraged from penetrating them to get at the story. It will be shaped by our personalities. Just as two persons are unlikely to sing a song or drive an automobile in quite the same way, they are unlikely to express the same thought in precisely the same way. In fact, we read some writers as much for their unique manner of expression as for what they have to say. It will be shaped by our purpose in writing. A style appropriate to one occasion may be singularly inappropriate to another. A letter proposing marriage to a young lady should be vastly different in style as well as in substance from a letter soliciting funds for a new church. As humorists well know, a style inappropriate to the subject matter is one means of achieving the ludicrous. Unfortunately, writers may unintentionally write ludicrous prose for the same reason. Here a physician, writing for a sober medical journal, has tried to combine a florid, poetic style with the scientific terms of medicine in an article about senile persons and their comas:

How readily they slump into a position of rest and relaxation. How facile it is for them to fall asleep and lapse into deep somnolence. How they keep their mouths open, snore heavily, with their cheeks pulled in hollow. At times their respiration is noisy, with dull moaning and groans. Their breathing halts and falters with poor thoracic expansion and abdominal excursions.

Some writers contend that style should be unobtrusive, that it should not intervene between writer and reader. Style is a means, not an end, they say, and it should enhance the writer's message, not detract from it by calling attention to itself. Other writers disagree. They note that we read cer-

tain writers as much for their style as for their message. Yet in most of the writing that you are likely to be doing, you will be trying to impart information and ideas, and you probably will do so best if your writing style does not stand in the way of your message. This does not mean that your writing should be impersonal, unoriginal and gracelessly utilitarian. It means rather that you perhaps should worry less about deliberately trying to cultivate a writing style than about endowing your prose with the elements of a good writing style.

What are those elements? Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch said that they are appropriateness, perspicuity, accuracy, and persuasiveness. By appropriateness, he meant that style should be suited to subject and to occasion. By perspicuity, he meant that writing should be understandable. Perspicuity and accuracy are the two qualities that comprise the kernel of all good writing, he said, and by accuracy, he meant that words should be used with precision: "Words are . . . the only currency in which we can exchange thought even with ourselves. Does it not follow, then, that the more accurately we use words, the closer definitions we shall give to our thoughts?" By persuasiveness, he meant that writing should be a thing of beauty so as to achieve the aim of all arts—converting others to share the message that the artist has to offer. Others have used quite different words to describe essentially the same qualities of good writing. Instead of using Sir Arthur's terms, let us say that the elements of a good style are simplicity, economy, concreteness, and precision, and let us agree that we will strive for a style characterized by unity and emphasis.

As we examine those elements, we are going to give a good deal of attention to the sentence. All too often, amateur writers become so concerned with their composition as a whole that they give little attention to the sentences that make it up. For them the sentence is just a string of words bounded at one end by a capital letter and at the other by a period or

question mark. They give little thought to the arrangement of words between the capital and the end punctuation. They do not cast their sentences; they perpetrate them. True, the sentence is not an isolated unit; it is a part of the whole. Yet the way in which those individual units are constructed can greatly affect the whole.

SIMPLICITY. Simplicity in writing embraces many things. In some aspects, it is hard to divorce from other elements of style—economy, for instance. Simplicity does not require that you patronize your reader. It does not require that you use the language of the primer or that you dilute your ideas. But it does require that you express yourself with the naturalness and easy grace of polished conversation. And make no mistake: Writing simply is hard work.

To achieve simplicity, you should avoid what the late Irving Lorge has called “idea density”—cramming so many ideas into so few sentences that the reader has difficulty grasping them. The typical reader can absorb only a few ideas, or even one or two aspects of an idea, at one time. Therefore, a certain amount of redundancy in writing is a good thing. Therefore, too, the writer who aims at simplicity will not move along too rapidly for the idea-span of his reader.

To achieve simplicity, you also will have to do a little of the reader’s work for him. Although you might expect the reader to recall what you have written a paragraph or two back, you probably would be wise to assume that he will not. Therefore, you should not require him to retrace his steps any more than is necessary. Take these sentences: “At the dinner sponsored by the ladies’ aid, we were served chicken soup, glazed baked ham with pineapple slices, mashed potatoes and gravy, tossed salad, apple pie with cheese or ice cream, and coffee. The first of those was prepared by Mrs. Johnson.” When the reader comes to that “the first of those,” he is forced back to the middle of the previous sentence (unless, of course, he is accustomed to memorizing lists as

he reads along). Expressions like “the former” and “the latter” make similar demands on him: “Wilbur and Algernon climbed a tree. The former fell.” You can spare the reader the return trip: “Wilbur and Algernon climbed a tree. Wilbur fell.”

Another way you can do some of the reader’s work is to translate statistics into something he can understand. Generally it is a good idea to translate figures into their lowest denominators so that 20 percent, say, becomes “one in every five.” Reading along, the reader cannot readily make comparisons between sets of complicated figures. You should make them for him. It is one thing to assail the reader with production figures of farms of various sizes; it is quite another to tell him, “Of the three million farms in the United States, one-third account for 90 percent of the output, the other two-thirds for the remaining 10 percent.” The reader often encounters figures so huge that he finds them hard to comprehend. You can translate them into his own experiences:

In the summer of 1963 when W. R. Simmons released his reports on magazine audiences, he credited *Life* with reaching 39,626,000 individuals with each average issue. . . . If you counted a *Life* reader every second, eight hours a day, seven days a week, it would take you almost four years to reach the total of *Life’s* audience.

Simplicity means avoiding extraneous ornamentation. Some beginning writers equate ornate prose with good prose. So do some professional writers. The late Alexander Woollcott had a considerable following, but there can be little dispute that he cluttered his sentences with a lot of dust-catching bric-a-brac:

It was in 1905 on May third, my dears, that, for the second and last time, the case of the People of the State of New York (ever a naive litigant)

against Nan Randolph Patterson was entrusted to the deliberations of an infatuated jury. After being locked up all night, they tottered from the jury-room to report that they, like the susceptible twelve who had mediated on the same case six months before, were unable to decide whether or not this handsome wench was guilty of having murdered Caesar Young. . . .

That passage is typical of Woolcott's fussy, spinsterish style marked by his fondness for the quaint or archaic turn of phrase and for verbal embroidery.

Using a slightly elegant word instead of a simple one contributes to ornateness. Although "appellation" is a perfectly good word, it is less direct than "name." Using a series of slightly elegant words to do the work of a single word is excessive ornamentation. "The congregation voted in the affirmative" means "The congregation voted yes."

Circumlocution in any form is invariably an enemy of simplicity. Some writers can never call a spade a spade; for them it becomes "an instrument with wooden handle and metal scoop to be used in conveying dirt and for sundry other tasks." The direct word or phrase often bespeaks a harsh reality that people try to soften with euphemisms, and euphemisms are usually wordy. Death, for instance, is something that most people find it hard to speak about directly. They find "passed away" preferable to "died." Even in medical journals, seldom does a patient "die," although many illnesses "have a terminal effect." Euphemism is by no means confined to death, of course, and circumlocution is by no means confined to euphemism.

Another foe of simplicity is elegant variation. Some writers, once having used a word, are determined to use it no more. Thereafter, they grope for substitutes, each of which becomes more desperate than the preceding one. Newspaper-men, sports writers in particular, are prone to this affliction:

Sam Rubicon scored three touchdowns for Binkley U. in the first half. The husky fullback first hit pay dirt in the first quarter when he recovered a Buckeye fumble. The former star of the Paris, Ill., team scooted into the end zone a second time when he made a brilliant line plunge. The potential All-American gave spectators their third big thrill in the last minutes of the half when he broke through the Ohio defense.

The last word about this failing belongs to Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch:

An undergraduate brings me an essay on Byron. In an essay on Byron, Byron is (or ought to be) mentioned again and again. My undergraduate has a blushing sense that to call Byron Byron twice on one page is indelicate. So Byron, after starting bravely as Byron, in the second sentence turns into "that great but unequal poet" and thenceforward I have as much trouble with Byron as ever Telemachus with Proteus to hold and pin him back to his proper self.

ECONOMY. One part of writing simply is precisely expressing your ideas in as few words as are absolutely necessary. In an earlier version of that sentence, the advice was to express them "in as few words as possible," but that advice will not stand the test of logic. Western Union telegrams usually express ideas in as few words as possible, but they are rarely good prose. One can express "half a league, half a league, half a league onward" as "1 ½ leagues onward," but the truncated version has lost all sense of the determined advance of the Light Brigade. Edward Doherty once complained of the butchery that a copyreader had performed on one of his dispatches when he was covering the Pancho Villa insurrection. "I sent back a singing line about a forgotten, flea-bitten little

Mexican town. I described it this way: 'Half a dozen 'dobe huts and half a hundred dogs.' And what do you suppose the copyreader changed it to? 'Six adobe houses and 50 dogs.' "

Yet, simplicity, apart, there are several good reasons for using as few words as you can. Consideration for your reader demands that you trespass on his hospitality no longer than necessary. Emphasis encourages economy. A writer who consistently uses more words than he needs to invariably detracts from his forcefulness by covering his major points with rhetoric. Space limitations require economy. To get across all of the information and ideas that he thinks necessary within the space limits of book, magazine article, pamphlet or sermon, a writer has to make every word count.

If you fail to realize the meaning of words, you risk wordiness. Vardis Fisher in his *God and Caesar* contended that Thomas Wolfe was a wordy writer because he was an imprecise writer. Confronted by five or six adjectives meaning roughly the same thing, Wolfe would not choose the one that conveyed his precise shade of meaning; he used all five or six. In a lesser way, the misuse of words defeats economy. In a mystery novel, a well-known author wrote, "She sped hurriedly out of the room." Since one does not speed without hurry, the writer could have said, "She sped from the room" or "She hurried from the room." A leaflet soliciting funds for a college said, "The chapel will be built in a wooded grove at the edge of the campus." Since "grove" means "small wood," the adjective "wooded" is superfluous.

If the writer has a lapse of common sense, he may be wordy. A student once wrote, "Perhaps you too have noticed that you avoid this sort of person whenever he is around." Since it is hard to avoid a person unless he *is* around, the sentence is wordy. Stating or restating the obvious also leads to uneconomical writing. In a case report about a ten-week-old boy in a medical journal, a physician wrote, "The child was a pale and flabby infant." The author had already said the patient was a boy; the age made clear that he was an infant.

So the sentence could have been, "The child was pale and flabby."

A number of common expressions use more words than necessary to convey their ideas. As you become conscious of word economy, you will perhaps form a mental list of your own. Until then, here is a start:

In the event that instead of *if*. "In the event that the congregation deserts you, keep calm," instead of, "If the congregation deserts you. . . ."

As a result of the fact instead of *because*. "As a result of the fact that the sermon was boring, the parishioner dozed," instead of, "Because the sermon was boring. . . ."

It is likely that instead of *perhaps* or *probably*. "It is likely that Daniel will succeed," instead of, "Daniel will probably succeed."

In spite of the fact instead of *despite* or *although*. "In spite of the fact that he was eighty, he could lift a piano," instead of, "Despite being eighty, he could lift a piano," or "Although he was eighty, he could. . . ."

During the time that instead of *while*. "During the time that he lived in Zanzibar, he wrote sonnets," instead of, "While he lived in Zanzibar. . . ."

At that time instead of *then*. "He was a seminary student at that time," instead of, "He was a seminary student then."

At the present time instead of *at present* or *now*. "He is a clergyman at the present time," instead of, "He is now a clergyman."

In time, you should recognize certain patterns to wordiness. The "of—the" construction is one: "Concrete is used in the building of homes," instead of, "Concrete is used in building homes," and "Reflection is important in the writing of sermons," instead of, "Reflection is important in writing sermons." Verb phrases instead of single verbs are another: "to bring to a conclusion," instead of, "to conclude," for instance; "to accomplish the elevation of," instead of, "to elevate;" "justified in using," instead of, "justifiably use."

Certain grammatical constructions, as you will recognize, also make for wordiness. For instance, the passive verb form, besides weakening the sentence, is usually wordier than the active. "Icons are collected by Harry" takes two more words than "Harry collects icons." Sentences beginning with such expletives as "it" and "there" often can be recast for economy. "It was obvious that John liked to meditate" is three words longer than "John obviously liked to meditate." "There are three men in the vestry" can be tightened to, "Three men are in the vestry."

However, there are good reasons for using "there are" on occasion. The economical form is not always best. For sentence rhythm, for change of pace, for clarity, for other reasons, you will sometimes be justified in using a few more words than you really have to.

CONCRETENESS. If your writing is to have color, action, and drama, you should choose the concrete word over the abstract word, the specific word over the vague one. People like to read about people and things. They prefer them to abstractions. Yet government functionaries, academics and, alas, churchmen are enchanted by abstract nouns that make their prose bloodless—nouns like "problems," "conditions," "factors," and so on. Thus one of them may write:

One of the conditions that has created a problem for the youthful male portion of the population is the possibility of conscription into the armed forces. This is a factor in their decision to attend institutions of higher learning rather than to seek employment on their graduation from secondary school.

Grammar apart, that is a bad passage, for its whole emphasis is on "conditions," "problems," "factors" and "institutions," not on the young men affected. What the writer could have said was: "Young men fear the draft. So after high school they go to college instead of looking for jobs."

To read a shameful amount of gummy prose in annual reports, bulletins, handbooks, scholarly articles, and even sermons, one would never suspect that people are involved, for woolly abstractions dominate the sentences. A handbook might say, "One of the conditions of employment is that the individual be unmarried." It means, of course, "We hire only single persons." If you would give your writing warmth and humanity, virtues one would expect in the prose of churchmen, never forget the people behind the abstractions. Let *them* dominate your sentences.

How strong your sentences are will depend on how strong your verbs are. For strong sentences, you should prefer the active verb to the passive one, the concrete one to the general one. Compare these two sentences: "The invocation was given by the Reverend David Blair." "The Reverend David Blair gave the invocation." In three ways, the second version is an improvement over the first. It emphasizes a person, not an abstraction. It uses fewer words. It is stronger. Action in your sentences requires specific words. Suppose, for instance, you wish to say that a man entered a room. You could write, "He entered the room." But *how* did he enter? Choose the verb that best describes his movement: "He sneaked into the room," "lurched into the room," "staggered into the room," "stumbled into the room," "strode into the room," "trudged into the room," "skipped into the room," "bicycled into the room."

Likewise, your adjectives should be specific rather than general. If you would have the reader see what you want him to see, you should avoid making judgments for him with such generalities as, "He was flashily dressed." Rather, let the reader make his own judgments on the basis of your description:

He wore a green and black checked coat over his lavender shirt. His purple tie was splotted with yellow, as if someone had crushed an egg against it.

His chocolate-colored trousers with their chalk-line stripes broke neatly just above his moss-hued loafers.

Specific detail, then, can give your writing action, color, and interest. In these two passages, notice how the detail of the second makes it more readable than the first:

John O'Hara does his writing in a study crammed with books and memorabilia.

Or as Don A. Schancke wrote it in *Esquire* for August, 1969:

The study from which the most prolific major writer of our time sends forth a minimum of one important new book and a variety of personal essays each year looks like the back room of a remainder shop whose proprietor cannot bear to part with anything he has touched. Tilting stacks of paperback and hard-cover foreign editions of his own novels and story collections, translated into Dutch, Spanish, Vietnamese and seventeen other languages, hide the surface of a huge, round coffee table that stands uncomfortably between two overstuffed leather lounge chairs before a bay window. *Who's Who*, the *Dictionary of American Biography*, *Britannica*, old catalogs and dozens of other reference works jam together on the bookshelves like crowded men with hunched shoulders, except where better-bound editions of the author's own books are prominently aligned with a little more shoulder room. The remaining wall and shelf space is almost entirely covered, or littered, with inscribed *New Yorker* cartoons, glassed-over photographs turning sepia at the edges, hunting horns, indeterminate brass objects. . . .

PRECISION. Another element of good writing is precision—

saying what you mean in such a way that the odds favor your reader's grasping your meaning. Much writing is imprecise, and the reasons are several.

The vastness of the English language is one reason. Because the writer can choose among thousands of words, most of them words that he rarely uses, he cannot be expected to use every word correctly every time. Moreover, he must arrange his words in some logical order to create a sentence. A statistician for the *Saturday Evening Post* once calculated that the words in a ten-word sentence could be arranged in more than 3,628,000 different combinations, if one paid no attention to meaning. A writer must be concerned with meaning, of course. But each of those ten words probably has several synonyms, and even within the constraints of good grammar those words can be ordered in a number of logical ways. The chances for imprecision abound.

Insincerity is another reason for imprecision. George Orwell called it the great enemy of clear language. Much of the political writing of our time is a defense of the indefensible, Orwell said, and so must consist of vagueness and euphemism. When millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along roads with no more of their possessions than they can carry, the brutality is too great for the reader to bear, except in such palliative phrases as "transfer of population" and "rectification of frontiers." But insincerity is not restricted to the political order. It can permeate many of our relations with our fellow man, and we may find the pious platitude more palatable than the precise statement.

Writers with little to say sometimes hide behind imprecision. A writer can make the most trivial thought sound important if he expresses it vaguely enough. This use of imprecision is well known to certain writers of sermons, commencement addresses, inspirational after-dinner speeches, and newspaper editorials, among others. The skeptical reader can find evidence for this observation in the issue of *Harper's* magazine for December, 1951, which after more than a

quarter of a century reprinted an address for all occasions called "The Crisis."

Much imprecision comes about because the writer does not pay attention to what he is saying. If the writer does not clarify his thoughts before he expresses them, he can scarcely expect the reader to find him lucid. If the writer does not know what he means, he can scarcely expect the reader to get his meaning. Yet many writers will plop down their sentences with little regard for emphasis, for logical arrangement of material, or for the precise meaning of the words and phrases they use.

For precision and clarity, you should know the meanings of the words you use. Here is an excerpt from an editorial in a student newspaper written by someone who did not: "Let's abolish the senior class officers! The fact that only one campus party, the All-College, has nominated candidates for the coming election shows the students themselves have no interest in the election." Now, the dictionary defines *officer* as "one who holds an office." Presumably the student paper, then, was advocating the mass annihilation of students who held class offices. Here is another example, this one from a magazine article: "And other Americans, who own hair preparation factories, have achieved bigger and bulkier bank accounts." The word *bulky* refers to voluminous size and commonly implies an object with a somewhat definite shape. Since a bank account is only a paper record (which could acknowledge millions of dollars on a single line), it can scarcely be bulky. Even educated writers often confuse constraint and restraint, imply and infer, located and situated, and transpire and happen, to cite only a few examples from a long list.

For precision and clarity, you should avoid the ambiguous word or phrase. Words can have more than one meaning; you should be sure that the reader gets the meaning you intend. The writer of this sentence probably knew what he meant: "For after-dark occasions, men are advised to wear light

suits." Since "light" refers to both weight and color, however, the writer should not have been surprised if some of his readers turned up in pearl-gray woollens, some in summer-weight blacks, and a few, the pedantic ones who accepted both meanings, in summer-weight whites.

Word choice is not enough for precision; you should also make sure that every word or phrase is in its proper place in the sentence. Misplaced adverbs, nouns, participles and clauses can undermine clarity. Perhaps the most frequently misplaced word in the English language is *only*, yet a change in its position can completely alter the meaning of a sentence. "I only saw him once," in which the *only* modifies the verb, means something quite different from "Only I saw him once" and "I saw him only once." Here is a sentence from a medical manuscript made ambiguous because of faulty structure: "100,000 Americans die every year." They do not, of course; they die only once. But it is true that "every year 100,000 Americans die." Here is a listing from a television guide: "Johnny Carson is host to news correspondent Sander Vanocur, Biff Rose, Phyllis Newman, Charlie Callas, and Cleon Jones of the New York Mets on 'The Tonight Show.'" Despite what that sentence says, not all of those guests are members of the New York Mets. The writer could have said: ". . . host to Cleon Jones of the New York Mets, news correspondent Sander Vanocur," and so on. The press association reporter who wrote this sentence was neither precise nor gallant: "The critics applauded her stage presence, her lack of affectation, charm and looks."

Precision in writing involves more than following those few rules, but by now the central point should be apparent: You must be ever conscious of what you are trying to say if you expect the reader to understand you.

UNITY. Earlier, when we spoke of organization, we said that the piece of writing as a whole should have a oneness about it. In writing the article no less than in organizing it, you should apply the principle of unity.

In your paragraphs, you should bring together material that belongs together. Your paragraphs should not be bins for holding odds and ends. One device for achieving unity is the topic sentence, a single sentence which sets the theme for the paragraph or sets down a generality that the paragraph will develop. As the topic sentence also makes for emphasis, it has a double value.

Your sentences too should express a single thought, or related thoughts. "He liked cucumbers and went to the football game" fails the test miserably. Unity comes from avoiding the idea density that we mentioned when speaking of simplicity, the failing of stuffing sentences with so much material that the reader finds them undigestible. It comes from giving proper proportion to the ideas you express, a point that leads naturally to emphasis.

EMPHASIS. In the paragraph and in the sentence, you can achieve emphasis in much the same way as in the piece of writing as a whole—by position (where you put material), by proportion (how much space you devote to it), and by stylistic devices (such as repetition and alliteration).

In the paragraph, the logical position for emphasis is in the opening sentence, since that is where the eye naturally lights first. Several years ago, the editors of *Petroleum Week* took advantage of that reader characteristic in preparing articles that would be as suitable to the hurried reader who wanted just the important points as to the leisurely reader who wanted full documentary detail. They insisted that their writers open each paragraph with a topic sentence, which they had set in boldface type. By reading just the first sentence of each paragraph, the hurried reader got a synopsis of the article. The editors were delighted to discover that the arrangement converted some hurried readers into leisurely ones. Their interest aroused, the readers wanted more detail than the topic sentences gave them.

Important material belongs in the beginning sentence, then; unimportant material there may get more emphasis than it

deserves. The end of a paragraph is not a natural place for emphasis. You can get it there, though, if you work for it by constructing your paragraph so that the last sentences come as a climax:

They were watching the planes so intently that for a few moments no one noticed that Anderson, the navigator, the twenty-one-year-old from Oregon who was on his final mission, had slumped to the floor of the dinghy. Forgetting the fighter planes overhead, forgetting their exhaustion, forgetting that help was coming, the other three knelt around him. There was nothing they could do. He was dead. Then the boat came.

Proportion is another way of getting emphasis in the paragraph. It is so obvious a device that it deserves little comment. All other things being equal, if you devote most of a paragraph to one idea, a sentence or two to another, the idea getting the greater amount of space will get the greater emphasis.

Stylistic devices also can earn you emphasis. Repetition, carefully executed repetition, is one such device. Deliberate repetition for emphasis is quite different in effect from careless over-use of a single word. Repetition for effect is not the same as monotony. Variation in sentence length is another device for getting emphasis. You change your pace. You give the reader a series of long sentences, then confront him with a short one. Turn to the quotation two paragraphs back, and you will see that it consists of two long sentences followed by three shorter ones. Or consider the force that a single word gives this passage: "If you will work long and hard on your sermons, if you will endow them with the profound thought and the provocative phrase, if you will deliver them with force and clarity, your pews will be full. Maybe." Variations in paragraph length may be as effective as variations in sentence length. A short paragraph, one consisting of one or two sentences, has special impact if it comes after several long ones.

Balanced structure is another device for getting emphasis. You cast a series of sentences from the same mold, as Charles Dickens did in the opening of *A Tale of Two Cities*:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct to the other place—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.

If you will recite the Twenty-Third Psalm, you will find the device again at work. Balanced structure is an effective way of heightening contrasts, as Dickens demonstrated. It also can be a congenial partner of repetition.

In sentences, as in paragraphs, you can get emphasis by means of position, proportion and stylistic devices. Sometimes you can get emphasis at the start of the sentence. To do so, however, you may have to invert the natural word order of your sentence: "Black is the color of my true love's hair," for instance, and "Quietly my captain waits." Consider this sentence: "Nasturtiums, pansies, roses and phlox—he grew all of them." Somehow it seems to give greater emphasis to what the writer wanted to emphasize than, "He grew nasturtiums, pansies, roses and phlox." A little inversion goes a long way, though; use much of it, and your readers will find your sentences hard to follow. Certainly the opening of a sentence is not the place for clearly subordinate information: "According to Norman N. Miller, writing in the East Africa Series of the American Universities Field Staff Reports, witchcraft beliefs are on the rise in much of Africa." In that sentence,

what is said seems more important than where it was said.

Much more easily and naturally, you can get emphasis at the end of the sentence. One way of getting it there is by using a dash to set off the idea you want to emphasize: "One thing Maxwell feared—his mother-in-law." Another way is by suspense; a series of dependent clauses leads to the climactic independent clause that embodies the major idea: "Although John was a murderer, although he robbed the poor and cheated the gullible, although he beat his wife and kicked his children, although he lied and cursed, he was prompt in returning library books." You can use phrases instead of clauses, especially if they are arranged in order of increasing importance, to build up to a climax that gives emphasis. In these two sentences by Carl Sandburg in an article in *Holiday*, notice how he gets emphasis at the start of the first by inverting the natural word order, emphasis in the second by using a succession of phrases:

Black is the color of this land the farmer loves.
From anywhere amid this land the roads lead to the
trade and transportation center, the livestock and
farm machinery center, the vortex of toolmakers—
Chicago.

In the sentence, you can also gain emphasis by proportion. Your general rule should be to give the most space to your major ideas, the least space to your minor ones, and above all to put your major ideas in the strong parts of your sentences and your minor ones in the weak parts.

If you follow that advice, you ordinarily will express your major ideas in independent clauses, your minor ideas in dependent clauses and participles. Although it is hard to illustrate that point with sentences out of context, let us try with this example: "When his father died, he was six years old." If the father's death is the idea to be stressed, the sentence is faulty, since the major thought is reported in the weak dependent clause. Adjust the sentence to the relative importance

of the two ideas, and you get something like this: "When he was six years old, his father died." For a sentence that really fails to express major ideas in its strong elements and subordinate ideas in its weak elements, take this one: "Mr. Jordan, the caretaker of our church, is an old man, and he has held that job for twenty years." Recast for emphasis, the sentence becomes, "Mr. Jordan, an old man, has been caretaker of our church for twenty years."

One fault to avoid is the indiscriminate use of "and" to link unequal ideas, unrelated ideas and cause-and-effect ideas. Here "and" joins two ideas of unequal importance: "I entered the room, and I was introduced to the president of the United States." The commonplace idea of entering a room can be subordinated: "Entering the room, I was introduced to the president of the United States." In the next sentence, "and" links ideas that are unrelated: "I like ice cream, and I belong to the YMCA." And in this sentence, "and" joins cause-and-effect ideas: "I got up late, and I missed my bus." The thought could be better expressed like this, "I missed my bus because I got up late."

Some well-known writers have deliberately and consistently violated those general principles of sentence proportion and the rule against the indiscriminate "and." Gertrude Stein was one; Ernest Hemingway was another. Here is the last sentence of Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*: "After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain." And here is a sentence chosen at random from his short stories: "He put a handful of coffee in the pot and dipped a lump of grease out of the can and slid it spluttering across the hot skillet." Hemingway was evidently counting on a natural rhythm, developed over long passages, to give his ideas their emphasis. He had a rare skill for the technique; few of his imitators have done nearly so well.

The stylistic devices that work for emphasis in the paragraph work for it on a smaller scale in the sentence. Repetition confined to a single sentence can sometimes be effective:

"Money, money, money, money—that is all Harry ever thinks about." A key phrase may be restated: "Writing is a lonely task, so lonely a task that the writer is grateful for every excuse to avoid it." As slogan writers have long known, alliteration can be a good way of gaining emphasis: "His formula for success is this—patience, perseverance, planning and pull." "Heroin and heartbreak go hand in hand." The occasional balanced sentence, as noted earlier, can bring emphasis to an idea: "His manners were magnificent; his sermons were a bore." "He loved his Antoinette; she loved his money."

When we spoke of economy, we mentioned a couple of points that deserve repeating here. First, for emphatic sentences, use strong verbs. Perhaps more than anything else, strong verbs will give your sentences power. Since it is hard to be emphatic in the passive voice, avoid passive verbs. Compare the relative strengths of the active and passive versions of this sentence: "John flung open the door and tossed in a bomb" versus, "The door was flung open and a bomb was tossed into the room." Second, for emphatic sentences, avoid verb phrases that cushion your ideas with padding. Here a phrase does no more work than a single verb can do: "The bell serves the purpose of awakening the sleeper." If one must retain that "serves," the sentence can become, "The bell serves to awaken the sleeper." But what the writer probably intended was, "The bell awakens the sleeper." These two before-and-after versions illustrate the same basic point: "The minister's sermon had the effect of putting me to sleep" instead of the clearer, "The minister's sermon put me to sleep." "His father subjected him to a beating" instead of the more direct, "His father beat him."

5. Using the Printed Media

Theodore Peterson

Up until now, we have dealt with writing in general. What we have said applies to almost any kind of writing that you are likely to do. Understanding the reader and meeting him on his own terms has implications for all writing. Organization is especially pertinent to constructing the magazine article, but it applies to the sermon as well. What we said about building unified, emphatic, readable sentences applies to sentences destined for church bulletins, personal and professional correspondence, magazine articles, talks—prose of any kind.

In this concluding section, we will consider a few of the many outlets for the written word, and here we encounter difficulties. For here we should be specific, and it is hard to be specific about the individual media without writing a full-length book about each one. Magazine writing and newspaper writing, in fact, have been the subjects of full-length books. Moreover, the churchman has control over some of the destinations of his written words (church bulletins, for instance, and sermons), but when he tenders other writing to outside media (magazines, say, and newspapers) then he has no control. Therefore, let us not pretend to be exhaustive as we explore using some printed media, first a couple over which the churchman has some control.

SERMONS, TALKS, AND LECTURES

Although the sermon, talk or lecture is oral communication,

although it can be delivered extemporaneously or from fragmentary notes, it deserves a couple of paragraphs here, for at its most thoughtful best it is spoken from a carefully constructed script.

Actually, a sermon or talk need not differ greatly in form from a magazine article. Since it requires a beginning, a body and a conclusion, it can be organized in essentially the same ways as we suggested for the article. It can profit from a theme, clearly stated and clearly developed, and from generalities illustrated by anecdotes and examples. It can profit from strong sentences and logical paragraphs.

However, there are some differences. The most crucial one is that a speech should be written for the ear, not for the eye. As we mentioned earlier, in oral communication, the speaker sets the pace, which may be too slow or too rapid for the listener, who cannot ask for a repeat of material that he has missed or failed to comprehend. Therefore, some redundancy is more defensible in a speech than in an article. The lead may profitably be longer than that of an article to give a restive audience a chance to settle down and adjust to the speaker.

CHURCH BULLETINS AND NEWSLETTERS

For a church bulletin or newsletter, the principles of organization and effective writing that have occupied us for so long are really the second or third things you should consider. Your first consideration should be why you wish to publish a bulletin and how you intend to achieve its objectives.

Whether you are starting a new publication or are associated with an existing one, a thoughtful examination of objectives is a wholesome exercise. At a short course for editors of company publications, the instructor once discovered that even the most experienced editors attending had a hard time defining the aims of their publications except in the most general of terms. After spending several hours drawing up statements of aims, only a handful of editors came

up with objectives that would justify the cost of their publications.

Every publication should have some justification for its existence, as we have noted, and a church bulletin or newsletter is no exception. When Briton Hadden and Henry Luce conceived the idea for *Time*, they outlined their plans in an eighteen-page, double-spaced prospectus which described in detail how their news weekly would correct the proposition that "people are uninformed because no publication has adapted itself to the time which busy men are able to spend on simply keeping informed." When the Methodist church started the *Christian Advocate* in 1826, its prospectus spelled out the mission of the new magazine:

It will be conducted on liberal Christian principles and is designed to be an entertaining, instructive, and profitable family visitor;—devoted to the interest of religion, morality, literature and science, household economy, and general intelligence both domestic and foreign.

And when the same denomination launched *Together* as its family magazine in 1956, it assigned to it the task of drawing "Methodist families together in a refreshed awareness of their common heritage of Methodism's meaning and mission within the context of the Christian Movement."

The place to state the aims of your publication is in a written prospectus. Since it is better to anticipate problems than to deal with them as they arise, your prospectus should be detailed and specific. As a starting point, you should answer three fundamental questions:

1. Just what do we wish to accomplish with this publication?
2. Just whom do we wish to reach?
3. Just what types of content should be included to accomplish our aims, given our target audience?

In deciding on the aims of your publication, you should be as specific as you can; the objective of "fostering Christian brotherhood" is so general as to be doubtful of accomplishment. The more circumscribed and like-minded your intended audience, the more specific your aims can be and the more sharply-focused the editorial content for achieving them. For its editorial staff, for instance, the Industrial Publishing Company of Cleveland issues a newsletter, *The Copyreader*, which "closely examines the writing in and for IPC magazines." The aim of the newsletter is to improve the writing in the company's fifteen specialized magazines, and it does so by a clinical dissection of grammar, syntax, usage and word choice in passages from recent issues. Your objectives need not be as specialized as that; neither need they be sweeping.

Although you are the one best qualified to define the objectives of your publications since you presumably are the one who has sensed the needs that the publication will fill, the aims of a church bulletin might well include some or all of the following, among others: (1) disseminating routine information about the church, (2) gaining participation in church activities, (3) providing a channel of intra-congregational communication, (4) orienting new members to the church, (5) acquainting members of the congregation with one another to foster a spirit of unity, (6) explaining the church curriculum.

After you have defined your aims and your audience, you should decide upon the broad types of content that will help you carry out each of your objectives. Suppose, for instance, that one of the aims of your bulletin is to acquaint members of the congregation with one another. Then you might publish brief personality sketches of lay leaders, mention newsworthy achievements of members of the congregation, and so on. If an aim of the bulletin is to encourage participation in church activities, certainly as a minimum each issue should carry a complete calendar of church-sponsored events. In short, each item in your bulletin should be functional; in some

way, it should contribute to the fulfillment of the objectives of the publication.

Besides answering those three basic questions, your prospectus might profitably address itself to several others:

1. What will you name your publication? (It should not be a name that lends itself to derogatory puns.) Is the name relevant to the mission of the publication? Is it simple enough to be easily remembered?

2. How often will you publish it? Why, apart from mere convention, have you settled on this frequency? What will be its publication date? On the one hand, the publication should appear often enough for continuity and timeliness. On the other hand, it should not appear so frequently as to be a burden to editor and reader.

3. What will be its format and why? What size should the pages be? A standard page size means production economies, but there are other considerations. If the publication is to be distributed at meetings, it should conveniently fit into pocket or purse. If it contains information of record, it should be of a size easily accommodated by standard notebooks or filing cabinets; for most people, legal-sized publications are hard to store. How many pages should each issue run? One can argue that a short bulletin published weekly or biweekly is more effective than a long one published monthly. Timeliness apart, it would avoid serving the reader more content than he is willing to absorb at one time.

4. How is the publication to be reproduced? Is this the most flexible, efficient, economical process?

5. How is the publication to be distributed? Is it to be handed out or mailed? Although mailing increases the chances that the publication will reach its intended audience, it may be more expensive. If the publication is to be mailed, have you properly anticipated possible delays in the postal service? If it is to be mailed, should it be enclosed in an envelope? The extra cost of providing envelopes might well be an economy, for a torn or crumpled publication loses its effectiveness.

6. Who is to have the final authority for approving material that appears in the publication?

That list of questions is more illustrative than inclusive; no outsider can cover every contingency in your local situation. The main point is that your prospectus should be logical, detailed, specific and anticipatory.

Although we have been talking here about church bulletins and newsletters, some observations about periodicals generally seems necessary. A bulletin or newsletter is, after all, a periodical, and it is governed at least to a small extent by the same principles that govern such more elaborate periodicals as *Atlantic*, *Christian Century*, *Commentary*, and *A.D.*

The content and design of any publication, along with the tone of its writing, will contribute to its personality, which should harmonize with its objectives and its audience. For whether or not an editor consciously strives to develop a personality for his publication, it will acquire one, if only by default. It may be serious or bright, leisurely or peremptory, confiding or detached, folksy or urbane, inviting or remote. Ideally, the personality should be one that suits both the functions of the publication and its readers. Thus a publication dealing with serious subjects for a mature, educated audience might well strive to convey authority without being austere and to explain complexities without being either patronizing or pedantic.

So it is with your bulletin or newsletter. It can be a boring, ill-kempt visitor who drones on and on with rambling accounts of long-past events, undependable information about future ones, overwhelming detail about matters of little consequence, and windy exhortation to vaguely noble causes. Or it can be quite something else.

ARCHITECTURE OF PUBLICATIONS

To describe the totality of a publication, let us use the term "architecture," which has as one of its meanings, "a style

and method of design and construction." To the architecture of most publications, the classical principles of unity, coherence and emphasis apply as forcefully as they do to the sentence, paragraph and article. They may apply less comprehensively to a bulletin or newsletter than to a magazine. But it is worth exploring some of their applications to magazine architecture so that you might be able to detect some of their implications for less elaborate publications.

UNITY. The cover of a magazine should have two kinds of unity. First, as should any layout, it should have a harmonious combination of type and artwork that speaks with a single voice. Second, its design, typography and illustration should reflect the spirit of the editorial content within. To link one issue with the next and to sustain the personality of the magazine over time, the cover of each issue should convey the same basic feeling as the one preceding it and the one succeeding it. It should, in sum, identify the publication.

The typography of the magazine also should have two kinds of unity. On the one hand, the typefaces chosen should be consistent with the desired editorial personality and mood of the magazine; they should harmonize with the content. On the other hand, the typefaces used in the various parts of the magazine should relate to one another. Magazines designed by amateur or inexperienced editors often look as if the editor felt compelled to sample every typeface in the printer's shop. The result is not variety but discord. The many faces distract the reader, and often no one of them can effectively complement the editorial personality. Usually a narrow range of typefaces in their several variations is adequate for tasteful design.

Layout involves coordinating several elements—title, text, artwork, white space—to achieve a single effect, that of directing and holding the reader's attention. Each two facing editorial pages should strike the reader as a single unit. If each page is designed independently, it will fight the other for the

reader's attention. If the title, text and illustrations are not welded into a unified whole, each of those elements will wage its own little battle to be noticed.

Editorial content to a large extent determines a magazine's personality. If a magazine is not to be schizophrenic, it must have some unity of content. It needs some pattern of content, some balance of broad article types, consistent with its reason for existence. It needs such a pattern to provide continuity from one issue to the next. It needs some uniformity of writing style.

COHERENCE. Coherence requires that all parts of the magazine hang together. One aspect of coherence is that the parts be put together according to some logic and that they have a clear relationship to one another and to the whole. In the positioning of articles, for instance, one brand of logic suggests that the editor open with his strongest article and follow it with enough other major articles to give the issue a body; other material can appear amidst the advertising at the front and back of the issue. (Another brand of logic adopted by some commercial magazines dictates running major articles throughout the issue to build reader traffic among the advertisements.) In typography, one brand of logic suggests the editor might use type of the same face or family to head new material, another face or family to head regular features and departments. *Christian Century* once used a Caslon roman for titles to its major articles, a tagline in Caslon italic to denote articles in a series or regular departments. In the table of contents, one brand of logic suggests that instead of merely listing the contents in the order of their appearance in the issue, the editor group them under heads that describe their appropriate categories, such as "Special Features," "Regular Departments," "News Notes," and so forth.

Another aspect of coherence is that the editor must guide the reader as he makes his way through the issue. Typographic signals of the sort that we just mentioned are one useful device. The contents page, even though it is not always the page

that the reader turns to first, can orient him to the entire issue. Instead of just listing the titles there, the editor can include under each one a brief summary of the article so that on one page the reader has a map to the issue. Within the magazine itself, a subtitle that amplifies each of the major articles can orient the reader to the accompanying text.

EMPHASIS. To make the important things in an issue stand out and to subordinate the lesser ones, the editor can use much the same devices that the writer uses in fashioning a paragraph or writing an article—position, proportion, special techniques.

The cover is the first part of a magazine that the reader sees. Therefore, it is a good place to emphasize outstanding features. A cover illustration that relates to the opening article underscores its importance. Running their titles on the cover calls attention to the major articles. On the contents page, the listing of contents is certainly the most important element, and it should stand out. Yet inexperienced editors often bury it amidst listing of the staff and other obligatory material. The contents listing should dominate the page; routine but necessary material which appears issue after issue should be cast in smaller type and subordinated. On the contents page, summaries of the articles under their titles contribute to emphasis as well as to coherence.

In layout, the various elements—title, text, artwork—should have a happy relationship of size, proportion and position. Although each of them should contribute to overall unity, it may be desirable to emphasize one of them to avoid a static page. There are at least five ways of emphasizing one of those elements on the page: (1) by giving it an unusual shape, (2) by surrounding it with abundant white space, (3) by contrasting it with the other elements in size, (4) by contrasting it with the other elements in lightness or darkness and (5) by putting it at a place in the layout where the other elements direct attention to it.

Titles are an obvious and excellent place for emphasis. Curiously, many inexperienced editors misuse them by em-

phasizing the wrong thing. To illustrate, let us say that in each issue the editor of a denominational magazine prints a sermon in a regular feature called "Our Sunday Sermon." Typically but incorrectly he will set the title of that feature, "Our Sunday Sermon," in large type and accompany it with a tagline based on the sermon in smaller type, "Prayers that moved mountains." His logic is faulty. Since the feature appears in every issue, it does not need emphasis; since the sermon each issue is the fresh element, it does. Therefore, he should make the tagline, "Prayers That Moved Mountains," his major title and give it the prominence of large type; he should make "Our Sunday Sermon" a subordinate tagline.

WRITING FOR NEWSPAPERS

Of the printed media over which you have no control, the one that you will commonly use and perhaps most effectively use is the local newspaper. Your relationships with it will likely be of two broad kinds. First, you can simply provide a reporter with the raw information on which he can base a story. This could mean phoning him to give him the news that a distinguished visitor will speak from the pulpit on Sunday, dropping him a note with details about a forthcoming church-sponsored project, or arranging for him to cover an all-day conference sponsored by your diocese or synod. In a large city, on a matter of great public interest and consequence, it could mean arranging a press conference to make an announcement, state a position and answer questions. Second, you can prepare a news release in a form that the newspaper can use with a minimum of rewriting and editing.

In either case, you should have some idea of the sorts of material that newspapers are likely to be interested in. Let us look at the local news that appeared on the weekly religion page of a daily in a city of about 90,000 in a fairly typical issue. Besides two columns announcing the services in the city's churches, there were four items of local interest: a picture showing what the First Baptist church would look

like after a \$100,000 remodeling program, a story about the use of a well-known form of the Holy Eucharist in modern idiom by a local Lutheran church, announcement that a visitor would preach on Sunday at another local church, and a story saying that the state Baptist association had broken ground for a new \$1,414,000 office building in the state capital. Those four items occupied far less space than the dozen or so other news stories and features supplied from across the United States by United Press International and Associated Press, but they do tell us something of what newspapers are most likely to use.

First, notice that none of the four items dealt with the substance of religion; all four dealt with buildings, people, events. One reason lies in the nature of news. News tends to be event-oriented. The press cannot report everything that happens, so newspapers station reporters at places where events are likely to be recorded—in the courts, for instance, and in public offices. More than forty years ago, Walter Lippmann in his *Public Opinion* remarked on this characteristic of news. News is not a mirror of society, he said, but a report of aspects that have obtruded. Before anything becomes news, it usually makes itself noticeable in some overt way. Therefore, some trends and developments in religion are difficult for newspapers to cover. The religion editor of one large daily once remarked, "If I wrote about some of the things I should, my boss would throw back the story because it has no news peg."

In evaluating what goes into the newspaper, the editor is guided by several news values. One is timeliness. Therefore, it is necessary to supply a newspaper with information about an event as soon afterwards as possible. Few newspapers are interested in a four-day-old account of a minor meeting. It is also desirable to be forward-looking, to anticipate events, to provide newspapers with information about them before they happen. The remodeling of that First Baptist church had not been completed, remember, and construction of the office

building had barely begun. Another value is proximity. Your editor is more interested in the churches in your town than he is in churches a state or two away. On matters of national interest, he would like to develop some local angle of interest to his local readers. Another value is human interest. The editor will publish stories that are intrinsically (and sometimes almost indefinably) interesting to his readers. A story about a six-year-old who sells his tricycle for money to help feed the starving Biafrans is not especially important, but it does have human interest. One aspect of human interest is unusualness. The story about the Holy Eucharist in modern idiom, which we mentioned, had that element. Still another value is consequence. A fire that destroys a city block is more newsworthy than one that razes a backyard shed, and a convocation of bishops has more to commend it as news than a regular meeting of deacons or elders. Because of that matter of consequence, according to Richard Philbrick, religion editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, sermons rarely are newsworthy in a metropolitan community:

The fact is no single congregation in Chicago today has so many prime members on its membership roll that it can, by itself, alter a given course of action in the city as a whole. In the days when Chicago's rulers could be found on a weekend within the walls of 18 or 20 places of worship, what they were told by clerics was likely to produce highly significant results. Today, when with all the force the president of Union Theological Seminary can muster behind his statement, the harsh truth is there is not one major problem of the community, political, social, spiritual, not one upon which the churches can make a significant and even appreciable impact by congregations or even by denominations. What that means in terms of news coverage is that the activities of individual churches in metro-

politan areas, and let me underline that I am speaking of a metropolitan area, seldom are of interest in the city newspapers.

Even if some sermons were newsworthy, Mr. Philbrick said, he would be physically incapable of covering all of the sermons preached in Chicago to determine which ones were. His remark points up one that we made earlier: Newspapers are unable to cover everything that happens. Because they are not, you might be able to increase coverage of church affairs by preparing news releases that papers can use with a minimum of reworking.

In form, the story in your news release should be an inverted pyramid, typewritten and double-spaced. If the editor is not able to use the release in its entirety, he will start cutting it from the bottom. Therefore, the first paragraph should give the entire story in summary by answering who, what, where, when, why and how. The rest of the story, elaborating on the lead, should give remaining information in order of its decreasing importance. Anticipating a shortage of space, you should make your release as brief as you can.

In style, you should follow the newspaper tradition of objectivity by sticking to facts and avoiding editorial comment and judgments. You should avoid words that carry an element of opinion; it is better to say that a meeting attracted two hundred persons than to call the attendance "large" or "small." Your sentences should be short, and so should your paragraphs.

In all of your dealings with the press, you would do well to heed the advice of Mr. Philbrick: "Do not be offended if reporters do not seem to accept your ideas. Be glad if they get an understanding of them."

WRITING FOR MAGAZINES

Although most of what we said about organization and writing applies especially to magazines, it is hard to general-

ize about what makes a good magazine article. The thousands of magazines in the United States have specialized content for specialized audiences, as we have repeatedly emphasized. Therefore, the best way to discover what magazines publish is to become thoroughly familiar with a few that might be most congenial to what you are qualified to write about. First study the *Writer's Market* or one of the other guides to editorial needs to find the names of those magazines. Then get a half-dozen copies of each magazine and study them clinically. Discover the balance of content to see if your proposed article would fit into it. Determine the magazine's preferences in word length, approach to subject, form of article development, tone, and style. In the past decade or so, an increasing number of metropolitan newspapers have launched locally edited Sunday magazine supplements. In form and style, the material they use is more like magazine articles than straight newspaper stories. Since the focus of those publications is on local and regional features, they are worth your exploration.

If you are convinced that a magazine is likely to be interested in an article that you have in mind, it is usually a good idea to query the editor before you proceed. For one thing, the magazine may already have a similar article scheduled for publication. For another, your letter of inquiry will bypass the pile of unsolicited manuscripts that the editor must contend with and get direct attention. For yet another, a large share of magazine content is planned by the staff, written by the staff, or both, and your most diligent analysis of issues cannot always tell you if your subject is one that the magazine is handling itself.

A query can be short, but it should include certain essentials. It should give the editor a clear idea of the theme of the article you are proposing, an indication of its length, information about your qualifications for writing it, and an acknowledgment that you are willing to undertake the article on speculation—which is to say that the editor is under no

obligation to pay you for the article unless it is publishable. Ideally, your letter should also give him some idea of your writing style.

If one of your articles is published, it will doubtless be the only incentive that you will ever need to write more. Robert Heilbroner, when he was president of the Society of Magazine Writers, explained why the magazine writer keeps writing: "America may not know who he is, but it listens to him, and there is a thrill in talking to your fellow-countrymen, even if they don't know it's you who's doing the talking."

EPILOGUE

INTEGRITY IN COMMUNICATION

B. F. JACKSON, JR.

Nearly every chapter in this book has raised serious ethical issues. If communication is to be a two-way street, the leaders and the led must work on all ethical issues involved. In this struggle we may develop a mutual faith in the communication process as a redeeming human experience.

A few suggestions:

1. Responsible persons can put more stress on acquiring knowledge on all significant issues. Skills in interpreting newspapers, magazines, radio, and television should be improved.¹

2. Personal convictions about important issues are needed, with a willingness to express these and work for them.

3. Some restrictions may be required to protect the receiver of communication from attempts made by the media (or individuals) to persuade people, especially children and youth, to do something against their best interest. Recent bans on cigarette advertising are a case in point.

4. The persons receiving communication input should have more attention in research and in other ways. Here the consumer is of utmost importance.

5. The inner controls necessary in communication cannot be legislated. Here the church has a great challenge to help all of us develop these controls.

6. While "meanings are always in people" many of us are more certain than we have ever been that there are a few ultimate meanings embedded in the truth of a Divine Being. This should challenge us to work hand in hand with those who think value systems depend entirely and ultimately on us as persons.

¹ Thomas Griffith, *How True: A Skeptic's Guide to Believing News* (Boston: Atlantic-Little Brown, 1974).

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